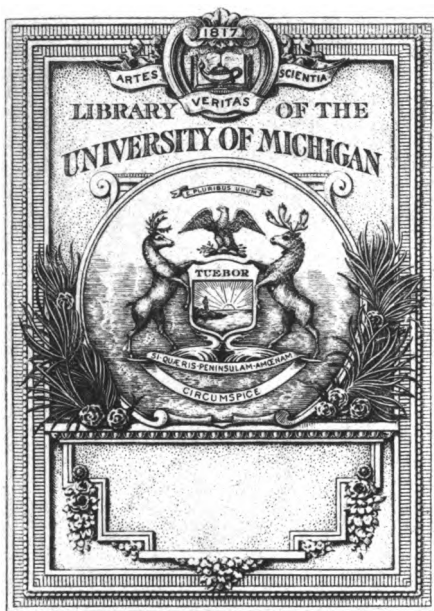

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**THE BOOKMAN ANTHOLOGY
OF ESSAYS [1923]**

Edited by JOHN FARRAR

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edited by *John Farrar*

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NEW YORK: GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

THE
BOOKMAN ANTHOLOGY
OF ESSAYS
[1923]

EDITED BY
JOHN FARRAR

NEW  YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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THE BOOKMAN ANTHOLOGY OF ESSAYS [1923]. I

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PREFACE

This book is not properly titled. It should not have been called "The Bookman Anthology of Essays." This is not a collection of essays; but of sketches, of discussions, of literary jottings, miscellaneous pieces that have been published in **THE BOOKMAN** during the past two years. My excuse for collecting them is that for the most part they are worth while in themselves, and, as a whole, seem to me to show the present-day literary attitude in America.

For a true anthology of essays one would be obliged to secure the work of English writers such as Chesterton, Lucas and Belloc, American writers such as Agnes Repplier, Samuel Crothers and Gamaliel Bradford. Perhaps some day it will be my good fortune to prepare such a volume; but for the present, I have attempted to give you an informal survey of the way those who write our books and our magazines are thinking to-day. These pieces of prose are not from

the pens of members of any single school or group of writers. Personally, I am one of those who believe that such schools or groups do not exist in the United States. At any rate, here are varying shades of opinion, varying methods of writing, varying moods. A Negro discusses the position of his race among American writers; one dramatic critic recounts anecdotes of O. Henry, another, memories of Sarah Bernhardt; Heywood Broun describes the reading of a great prize-fighter; Hugh Walpole chides the volatile Mr. Mencken, and Mr. Mencken replies. Charles Henry Meltzer was a dramatic critic in New York many years ago, Alexander Woolcott now serves in that capacity. Both of them are represented here. Arthur Bostwick is a famous librarian, William McFee, a ship's engineer who writes novels. William Lyon Phelps is a critic of enthusiasm and of experience. Burton Rascoe is a young man with a biting tongue and a fresh standard. Here they speak for themselves. My attempt has been, as you see, to present contrasts, and to present them without prejudice.

The only Englishmen included here are William McFee and Hugh Walpole, both of whom have such definite connections with America that they seem a part of our literary

scene. McFee has made New York his home port for many years and is about to become a naturalized American. Walpole went to school in New York when he was a boy, has lectured here with success, and, to my mind, understands and seems to like the United States, better than any other of the procession of visiting English novelists.

To understand current literary tendencies in America would be a Herculean task. To sympathize with such tendencies after they were understood would, I fancy, require the ability of a chameleon. To study them, however, is fascinating. As a public we are yet so young and so impressionable that we veer to the right and to the left with the slightest inflation of our sails; and following in the footsteps of Mr. Barnum, our mentors are peculiarly adept at furnishing the wind of publicity. This keeps our literary study clubs, our college curricula and our literary magazines and newspaper supplements in such a state of flux that analysis of a year's opinions issuing from the same fountain-head would be sure to uncover mirth-provoking inconstancy. In spite of all this, we are gradually developing a national taste in reading and a national interest in things cultural. I want you to note the curious and constant use by my contributors

of the name of Harold Bell Wright as a symbol of American taste.

I hope that in the following pages you will find a key which is not too heavy, which will unlock one door, at least, of the fortress of American opinion. As in "The Bookman Anthology of Verse" I hoped that you would read casually at first, here, too, I should be pleased if you would skim the volume rapidly, gaining from it, if my attempt has been successful, an informal, gay and yet real panorama of the world of letters in America to-day. When you return to your individual favorites, when you look, perhaps, further than this volume for more of their work, I hope you will find that writing in America, while it is formative, often crude, and occasionally ill-mannered, is gaining a vitality of expression and viewpoint which the literature of more polished countries is losing, or has lost.

J. F.

*New York City,
September, 1923.*

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**THE BOOKMAN ANTHOLOGY
OF ESSAYS [1923]**

THE BOOKMAN ANTHOLOGY OF ESSAYS

Heywood Broun

Large, shambling, often ill at ease, kindly, yet with that curious detachment which marks those who are much absorbed in their own thought, Heywood Broun invariably impresses one as possessing a child-like eagerness. Whether as sport writer, feature writer, critic of books or plays, collyumnist, essayist or novelist, his writing is characterized by the same freshness, the same accuracy of reporting. He was born in Brooklyn. For a time he attended Harvard University. His greatest enthusiasm is, perhaps, for baseball, though he likes poker. I like best to think of him in his office at the New York "World", about fifteen minutes before copy is due for the morning paper, surrounded by papers, letters from contributors,

his own jottings, what not, spinning a yarn from nowhere, gathering an opinion from the wind as it whistles around the tower of the Pulitzer Building. His wife is Miss Ruth Hale, writer and motion picture critic. His child is well known to the public through his father's writings as "H 3d." I have attended football games, theatres, dinners, and heaven save me, teas, with Mr. Broun. He always shows fresh curiosity for events as they unfold, a gentle sympathy for all types of men and a thorough disrespect for all forms of snobbery. It is natural that in the following essay he should defend the somewhat frowned on champion of the ring. Dempsey's child-like determination could not but appeal to the mind of Mr. Broun. If he were not so clever, he would be sentimental; as it is, he is thoroughly human.

MR. DEMPSEY'S FIVE-FOOT SHELF

IT is hardly fair to expect Jack Dempsey to take literature very seriously. How, for instance, can he afford to pay much attention to George Bernard Shaw who declared just before the fight that Carpentier could not lose and ought to be quoted at odds of fifty to one? From the point of view of Dempsey, then, creative evolution,

the superman and all the rest, are the merest moonshine. He might well take the position that since Mr. Shaw was so palpably wrong about the outcome of the fight two days before it happened, it scarcely behooves anybody to pay much attention to his predictions as to the fate of the world and mankind two thousand years hence.

Whatever the reason, Jack Dempsey does not read George Bernard Shaw much. But he has heard of him. When some reporter came to Dempsey a day or so before the fight and told him that Shaw had fixed fifty to one as the proper odds on Carpentier, the champion made no comment. The newspaper gossipier, disappointed of his sensation, asked if Dempsey had ever heard of Shaw and the fighter stoutly maintained that he had. The examination went no further but it is fair to assume that Dempsey did know the great British sporting writer. It was not remarkable that he paid no attention to his prediction. Dempsey would not even be moved much by a prediction from Hughie Fullerton.

In other words literature and life are things divorced in Dempsey's mind. He does read. The first time we ever saw Dempsey he discussed books with not a little interest. He was not at his training quarters

when we arrived but his press agent showed us about—a singularly reverential man this press agent. “This”, he said, and he seemed to lower his voice, “is the bed where Jack Dempsey sleeps”. All the Louises knew better beds and so did Lafayette even when a stranger in a strange land. Washington himself fared better in the midst of war. Nor can it be said that there was anything very compelling about the room in which Dempsey slept. It had air but not much distinction. There were just two pictures on the wall. One represented a heavy surf upon an indeterminate but rather rockbound coast and the other showed a lady asleep with cupids hovering about her bed. Although the thought is erotic the artist had removed all that in the execution.

Much more striking was the fact that upon a chair beside the bed of Dempsey lay a couple of books and a magazine. It was not *THE BOOKMAN* but “Photo Play”. The books were “The Czar’s Spy” by William Le Queux, “The Spoilers” by Rex Beach, and at least one other western novel which we have unfortunately forgotten. It was, as we remember it, the Luck of the Lazy Something or Other. The press agent said that Jack read quite a little and pointed to the reading light which had been strung

over his bed. He then went on to show us the clothes closet and the bureau of the champion to prove that he was no slave to fashion. We can testify that only one pair of shoes in the room had grey suède tops. Then we saw the kitchen and were done.

There had been awe in the tones of the conductor from the beginning. "Jack's going to have roast lamb for dinner to-night", he announced in an awful hush. Even as we went out he could not resist lowering his voice a little as he said, "This is the hat rack. This is where the champion puts his hat". We had gone only fifty yards away from the house when a big brown limousine drew up. "That", said the press agent, and this time we feared that he was going to die, "is Jack Dempsey himself".

The preparation had been so similar to the first act of "Enter Madame" that we expected temperament and gesture from the star. He put us wholly at ease by being much more frightened than anyone in the visiting party. As somebody has said somewhere, "Any mouse can make this elephant squeal". Jack Dempsey is decidedly a timid man and we found later that he was a gentle one. He answered, "Yes sir" and "No sir" at first. If we had his back and shoulders we'd have a civil word for no man. By

and by he grew a little more at ease and somebody asked him what he read. He was not particularly strong on the names of books and he always forgot the author, which detracts somewhat from this article as a guide for readers. There were almost three hundred books at his disposal, since his training quarters had once been an aviation camp. These were the books of the fliers. Practically all the popular novelists and short story writers were represented. We remember seeing several titles by Mary Roberts Rinehart, Irvin Cobb, Zane Grey, Rupert Hughes, and Rex Beach. Older books were scarce. The only one we noticed was "A Tale of Two Cities". This Dempsey had not read. Perhaps Jack Kearns advised against it on account of the possible disturbing psychological effects of the chapter with all the counting.

Dempsey said he had devoted most of his time to western novels. When questioned he admitted that he did not altogether surrender himself to them. "I was a cowboy once for a while", he said. "There's a lot of hoakum in those books". But when pressed as to what he really liked his face did light up and he even remembered the name of the book. "There was one book

I've been reading", he burst out; "it's a fine book. It's called 'The Czar's Spy'."

"Perhaps", suggested Ruth Hale of the visiting party, "a grand duke would say there was a lot of hoakum in that."

Dempsey was not to be deterred by any such higher criticism. Never having been a grand duke, he did not worry about the accuracy of the story. It was in a field far apart from life. That we gathered was his idea of the proper field for fiction. In life Dempsey is a stern realist. It is only in reading that he is romantic. A more impressionable man would have been disturbed by the air of secrecy which surrounded the camp of Carpentier. That never worried Dempsey. He prepared himself and never thought up contingencies. He did not even like to talk fight. None of us drew him out much about boxing. Somebody told him that Jim Corbett had reported that when he first met Carpentier he had been vastly tempted to make a feint at the Frenchman to see whether or not he would fall into a proper attitude of defense.

"Yes", giggled Dempsey, "and it would have been funny if Carp had busted him one on the chin." This seemed to him an extraordinarily humorous conceit and he kept chuckling over it every now and then. While

he was in this good humor somebody sounded him out as to what he would do if he lost; or rather the comment was made that an old time fighter, once a champion, was now coming back to the ring and had declared that he was as good as he ever was.

"Why shouldn't he?" said Dempsey just a little sharply. "Nobody wants to see a man that says he isn't as good as he used to be."

"Would you say that?" he was asked.

"Well", said Dempsey, and this time he reflected a little, "it would all depend on how I was fixed. If I needed the money I would. I'd use all the old alibis."

We liked that frankness and we liked Dempsey again when somebody wanted to know how he could possibly say anything in the ring during the fight to "get the goat of Carpentier". "We ain't nearly well enough acquainted for that", said Dempsey and we gathered that he was of the opinion that you must know a man pretty well before you can insult him. The champion is not a man to whom one would look for telling rejoinders, though he has needed them often enough in the last year and a half. Criticism has hurt him, for he is not insensitive. He is merely inarticulate. This must have been the reason which prompted some sport-

ing writers to feel that he would come into the ring whipped and down from the fact that he had been able to make no reply to all the charges brought against him. It did not work out that way. Dempsey did have a means of expression and he used it. There is no logic in force and yet a man can say, "Is that so?" with his fists. Dempsey said it. As the Freudians have it, fighting is his "escape". Decidedly he is a man with an inferiority complex. But for his boxing skill he would need literature badly. As it is he does not need to read about hairbreadth escapes. He has them, such as in the second round of the fight on Boyle's Thirty Acres. In summing up we can only add that as yet literature has had no large effect upon the life of Jack Dempsey.

But what does Carpentier read? That we must confess was part of our assignment. We have nothing to report. The challenger was in secret training throughout. Evidently his trainers hoped to worry Dempsey by not letting him know whether Carpentier was with Racine or Paul de Kock. And all the time Dempsey was sticking to "The Czar's Spy" and worrying not at all. We don't know then whether or not Carpentier is interested in literature or influenced by it, but the drama has made him. He is drama.

No piece of acting was ever so perfect as the tragedy which Carpentier played in Jersey City. We liked Dempsey but no sooner had Carpentier come into the ring than we began to cheer him and kept it up. The crowd cheered him when he took off his bathrobe, when he was photographed, when he almost knocked Dempsey down, and when he was himself knocked down. Leaving the ring a little later, he was cheered as no other beaten fighter has ever been cheered in America.

We wish every young American playwright who is about to write a tragedy had seen the fight. They would realize then that the school founded by Eugene O'Neill is based on a misconception of the spirit of tragedy. It does not lie in the fact that man is small and helpless in the hands of fate which outclasses him in reach and in weight. The tragic fact is that man is almost good enough to win in his inspired moments. He can rock fate but he cannot down it. That is the pity of the struggle. But come to think of it there is nothing so terribly sorrowful in tragedy after all. Fate, like Jack Dempsey, wins the title; but the gesture remains with man, the light heavyweight. As he goes down he hears no slow toll of numbers. All that is drowned out by the cheering.

William McFee

William McFee was born, I believe, on his father's ship. Most of his life he has spent in ships as a sea-going engineer. He has shown me the engine room of a fruit vessel with as much pride as the script of a new novel. A strong man, and a bluff man, with a seaman's sense of humor and a book lover's wisdom, he does not bemoan the vanished days of sailing vessels. His romances are those of the swift modern ships, of merchantman and transport. As an essayist and critic he is almost as well known as for his novels. Now, he has left the sea, bought a cottage at Westport, Connecticut, where he intends living with his mother who has come from England to join him. But the last one hears of him is sailing off with Captain David Bone, author of the "The Brassbounder," on the "Tuscania". On that trip one can picture many a chat such as the one described in the following essay. However, when he does settle down in the New England country, he will doubtless dream of the sea, and write his romances.

Here is an Englishman who has firmly adopted the ways of America. A quiet, deep-thinking man, William McFee, with a personality that is sturdy, rather than magnetic, dependable rather than fiery.

THE GENTLE ARGONAUTS

THE group in the smoke room this morning was a fairly representative microcosm. There were two men making the round trip because it was the slack of the year in their businesses, and Europe was too far, too costly, and too inconvenient. There were a couple of salesmen voyaging with the idea of conquering the West Indies for their houses, an official, with a monocle, proceeding to some distant British possession; and one or two of the ship's officers, who regarded the glittering beauty of the blue waters with bored and introspective eyes. In a far corner a young gentleman with extremely sleek black hair was writing a letter—he was no doubt a Latin American youth returning disconsolately to his own volcanic country after a hilarious time at an American university. In the palm court abaft the smoke room were reclining a number of dark dazzling creatures, their hands and arms and ears sparkling with massive gems, who were like-

wise returning to the bosoms of their families after a successful season in New York. And ever and anon there could be seen passing the open windows, as he made his morning promenade, the inevitable elderly and dried up Latin American of immense wealth, one of whom, in grey pants and alpaca coat, seems to be forever drifting to and fro on the waters of the Caribbean.

And in some way now forgotten by all concerned, the talk turned upon books.

"I never read anything," barked one of the roundtrippers, reaching for a match. "My wife's crazy about books—house is full of 'em—Ibáñez and Harold Bell Wright, and Shakespeare, and all those fellows. I never read any of 'em."

There was a delighted silence while he lit his cigar.

The Englishman's monocle showed a blind white glare as he looked out at the dancing sea.

"Oh, I shouldn't go as far as that", he murmured. "It is a great comfort, you know, in certain situations—the reading habit, don't you think?"

He didn't look it, but he had spent an anxious year in Mesopotamian prisons and would have gone mad there but for a damaged novelette which he had read so often it

had rotted under his hands. He received unexpected support from the other round-tripper.

"You've said something," agreed that gentleman. "I consider reading a very fine thing—a very fine thing indeed. I collect books, gentlemen, first editions of living authors. I have a remarkably fine collection—all signed first editions. I send my book-plate with a letter and the authors send it back signed."

"What's the good of that?" demanded his companion suspiciously. "Look at the cost!"

"Autographs," replied the other tranquilly, "are going up. Some of mine are worth fifty dollars."

His truculent friend let his jaw drop a little as he stared and digested this novel fact. He was interested in an indolent way. His suspicion, his truculence, his interest, all had a slightly meretricious air. He was on vacation. No doubt his attitude toward life at home was sane and humorous enough. Books were not his *métier*.

"Oh, no doubt," the Englishman was saying. "It is very difficult to make a decent choice, once you leave the regular well known men. Even they," he added, rubbing

his nose with the side of his forefinger, "let you down at times."

One of the salesmen reached behind him on the cushions and fished out a volume. "What would you say about this sort of thing," he asked, handing it over. "Everybody seems to be reading them now."

The Englishman accepted it gingerly, his rigid features assuming an expression of extreme concern, as though he felt he had been taken at a disadvantage. As he had. He had forgotten the American Law of Applied Responsibility. By this law, if you reveal an aptitude or a proclivity, you are instantly voted into a position where that aptitude or proclivity can be useful to the community and a source of profit to yourself. This peculiar custom is unknown in England, where a man of talent often spends half his life modestly concealing his ability, and the other half waiting for someone else to die, so that he can get a chance to use it. Realizing, however, that he was one of an imperial race, this particular Englishman braced himself, settled his eyeglass, and after examining the book said he had read it and "found it rather rot, you know."

"Oh, no!" objected one of the officers, suddenly. "It is a very important book, if

you look at it from the right standpoint. Did you read it through?"

"Couldn't," replied the Englishman in a small, precise voice. "I got as far as—as far as—well, anyhow, I had to chuck it. Not in my line."

"Then you can hardly set up as a judge of it," suggested the other. The Englishman was somewhat nettled.

"Only in so far as I couldn't stay the whole distance," he retorted. "That's criticism in a way I take it. What!"

There was a general laugh and a readjustment of moods as the waiter approached with tall glasses.

"You were saying—" murmured the Englishman after a first libation.

"That a book like this one here, a solidly packed slab of fiction, is a sign of the times. It has no particular features of originality at all. But it has for its theme and milieu the Marquesas or some such island group in the South Seas, and just at present there is a very peculiar craze for the South Seas. Anything at all, so long as it is about the South Seas, may go with the public, and the publishers take the wildest chances. People without any ability to write at all are preparing huge masses of trivial travel talk and illustrating it with photographs of them-

selves in loin cloths grouped with native women who do not look beautiful even in the prints. Anything at all may make a hit. They, the publishers, think of 'The Moon and Sixpence,' forgetting that Somerset Maugham's genius had a good deal to do with that book. They remember only that in spite of Curwood, Jack London, Ridgwell Cullum, and other specialists of the north, there is a decided set toward the South Seas."

"How do you account for that?" asked one of the company.

"I can't account for it, but I have sometimes felt that people were turning toward these distant spots of earth as to a kind of modern Hesperides or Fortunate Islands, where the troubles of life in steamheated apartments, department stores, and crowded subways, for instance, do not exist. The north and the west have been worked to death. The east, Europe and so forth, have gone down in our estimation as paradises. And so, led as usual by the artists, by Gauguin, Stevenson, and Somerset Maugham, we are all busy in the bazaars demanding private magic carpets to take us to the Sunny South Seas, where golden skinned men and delicious girls play *papalagis* to the *wahines*. Or is it the

wahines which are played to the *papalagis*? I forget. Nor does it matter. This search for innocent and philosophic harems is bound to fail. Those islands have no existence save for the artists who discover them. If you look around the promenade deck here you will find most of the passengers reading about the distant coral groups of the Southern Pacific, with one or two exceptions who are reading about the coral lips of Ethel Dell's heroines, or the cattle corrals of Zane Grey's virile heroes. The author of this particular book, however, has rashly decided to do without photographs of repulsive Polynesian women. The character of his hero, a handsome Englishman in love with a Latin American president's daughter, is out of date as well as out of drawing. Indeed there is no harm in a picture being out of drawing, as we say, if it carries you with it and conveys an authentic emotion. But to be out of date is the worst of literary crimes. All art is convention, and it is therefore imperative that you use the current convention to reveal the truth. This book reveals nothing save the author's absurd notions of the ingredients of a romance."

"A romance is a love story, I take it," said someone.

"Quite possibly. Nowadays, however, a

romance has to take place on an island. Have you ever reflected upon the fascination islands seem to exert upon novelists? Think of the islands of literature—a veritable archipelago! Shakespeare with his 'Tempest' was an early victim. Swift invented a floating island. Defoe of course you recall. Modern authors teem with islands. 'Treasure Island,' 'The Island of Doctor Moreau,' 'I'll des Pingouins,' 'The Island Princess,' 'Island Nights Entertainments,' 'The Isle of Unrest,' 'An Outcast of the Islands.' You can even include Kipling's 'Islanders' and Galsworthy's 'Island Pharisees' if you are of a sardonic turn. There is something romantic in the very nature of an island, something finite, enclosed, cut off, remote—the centre of a mysterious hemispherical universe of sea and sky. I admit this because I am under the spell of an island myself. I know an island, not so large, which is very dear to my heart. All day and all night you can hear the immense rumor of the tides of human life washing to and fro in the caverns, almost 'measureless to man,' of her rocks. Each day increase the great cliffs of coralline structure fashioned by her millions of tiny inhabitants. The men are not golden skinned, but they have strong hearts and

steady brains and are good comrades. As for the women, who would leave them for the doubtful charms of Polynesia? The women of my island are the most beautiful in the world, for they have been garnered from all over the world."

"Where's this place!" barked the truculent health seeker. "In the West Indies?"

The other man smiled a little and shook his head.

"Oh no," he said, signaling to the waiter, "we've just left it. I was speaking of Manhattan."

John Erskine

First, the lover of literature, second, the professor, I should say of John Erskine. This large, genial but positive gentleman has long been among the undergraduates one of the most popular professors at Columbia University. Yet he has preserved, in the midst of academic strictures, an unusual tolerance for modern tendencies in letters. While he chides you gently for carelessness of viewpoint or slovenly phrase, he is willing to find whatever is good in the new thing. His own poetry in its recent collection shows beauty of phrase, incisive imagery, and adherence to old models. Always he is interested in the young poet, and we find him the willing patron and adviser of undergraduate poets and poetry societies. Born in New York City, he took both his A.B. and his Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University. This has not made him, however, insular. As President of the Authors Club he made valiant attempts to keep that institution from a too rigid adherence to dusty tradition, and, if his efforts to unite and strengthen the

unruly and amorphous Poetry Society of America were not successful, failure must be traced to the nature of the organization itself rather than to any lack of effort on Dr. Erskine's part. His viewpoint is well illustrated by this essay in which he deplors the journalistic attitude. Technique, after all, is a god which cannot be lightly discarded. An able executive, a poet of charm, a teacher of great abilities, John Erskine has been a stabilizing force in American letters.

SPOTLIGHT OR FAME?

IF a popular writer today ever asks himself what his chances are for fame, he may well conclude that popularity is all he should hope for. He must see that the public have become accustomed to reading books but once, as they read a newspaper; that to maintain his position he must continue to bring out new books; and that when he comes to an end, other writers will take his place. He will notice also that authors who once reached a large audience now miss their old effect even though they continue to produce books—as though they had left the track of popularity without knowing it. He may wonder whether they are merely repeating themselves before an audience that must have

novelty, or whether—(comfort too tempting!)—their work has improved beyond the public taste.

However he analyzes it, the tendency he observes in our writing is a tendency toward journalism instead of art. The reward of journalistic success may be popularity, the temporary spotlight, but it cannot be fame. Fame is continued admiration for something that endures. The service that journalism renders us is too great not to have a vast appreciation, but the service is for a day, and the interest of a day is novelty, news, and the reward of news is the headline or the spotlight, not fame. Our books are largely written as news, advertised as news, criticized as news. Mr. Van Loon writes that James Harvey Robinson's new book "is a bomb." Another very contemporary critic says that Mr. Van Loon's own new book "has all the thrills of a Nick Carter detective story". Since the books so described are studies in history, we might expect them to have the praise of being true, but truth and news are not necessarily the same thing. To call a book a bomb or to compare it to a Nick Carter story is to give it the praise of news, which goes off but once. Mr. Van Loon and Mr. Robinson must write other books if they wish to hold the spotlight; the

bombs of memory, however cherished, cannot compete with actual noises.

The journalistic tendency is felt perhaps in all the arts, but most in books and in the theatre, less in music, still less in painting, and least in architecture and sculpture. From these last we can learn, if we need a reminder, what are the conditions of enduring art, and what, in contrast to popularity, is fame. Sculpture and architecture, from the substantial nature of their medium, must submit to be looked at more than once, to be lived with, finally to be judged by the good opinions of many men over a long period of time; and a good opinion of such work, so lived with, will depend less on the first impression than on habitual contact. For such work popularity is difficult, if not impossible. "Three Soldiers" is a popular book; the Farragut statue in Madison Square is not a popular statue. What statue is popular? It can have only the better kind of success, if any; like the Farragut, it can be famous, loved and returned to over an indefinite length of time. For we can read a book once and throw it aside, or hear music or see a play but once, and then criticize it; it lies entirely in our choice whether we shall read or hear twice. How different our criticism

would be if it were based on at least half a dozen readings and hearings.

It would be a misfortune to seem to be attacking journalism as such; what is here intended is only to distinguish between journalism and art. Art is the expression of life we can live with habitually. But there is much about life which we ought to know, and yet we do not care to dwell on, nor even enjoy hearing the first time. To give us this, along with other news, is the function of journalism. Mrs. Stowe's disclosure of Byron's private life may have been as necessary to print as she thought it was, in the interest of justice and morality, but it was journalism, not art. As much may be said today for Mr. O'Neill's plays, which as they follow each other in journalistic succession maintain a journalistic success by bringing headline news of society. If Mr. O'Neill should stop writing now, would his plays hold the stage? Of course the question is irrelevant if he is primarily concerned with educating us to the truth, as Mrs. Stowe was, but if he has an artist's interest in the permanent audience, in the judgment that ripens with long acquaintance, he may ask himself whether he has written anything yet that human beings will care to live with. "Three Soldiers", to return to the striking example,

was frankly advertised and properly criticized as journalism, as news, revelations of the now-it-can-be-told kind. In what he had to tell, Mr. Dos Passos, like Mrs. Stowe in her Byron story, may have been wrong, and nothing worse can be said of news than that it is not correct. But whether wrong or right, the book will be read widely as long as the psychology of the American soldier is a subject of popular debate, and then it will become as forgotten as Mrs. Stowe's far more sensational paper. For all we know, Mr. Dos Passos may be an artist as well as a journalist. When he begins the career of the artist, he will learn the old truth about art, that it is long, and that its reward in fame comes slowly. The same experience will come to Scott Fitzgerald and Dorothy Speare, or to any others who bring us news of the Younger Generation; they now enjoy our gratitude for the news, but in that kind of popularity there are always the seeds of neglect and obscurity—they must bring us more news, and more news, and they must keep up to date, or we will have another town crier. And what town crier, for all the attention he got, ever had fame?

It would be a misfortune also to seem to say that the author who misses popularity is necessarily an artist, or that even temporary

success is not to be admired. But in American letters we are beginning to wonder why our great successes are so transitory; why a writer who sells more copies of his first book than did Thackeray or Dickens, does not continue like them to reach a large public with succeeding books; and why he does not, like them, continue to be read after he has ceased to write. The explanation suggested is that most American writers, not only today but throughout the last twenty-five years, have written as journalists—have put out their material not as life but as news about life, and the critics have discussed it as news, and the readers have come to look for the news in it, and for nothing else. Some novelists still writing began their work with successful stories of local color, which we read in order to learn about Louisiana or Pennsylvania or the middle west; having got the information we were looking for, we went elsewhere to look into other novelties. It goes without saying that in this process we readers have done injustice to many a work of art; “Old Creole Days” and “Main Traveled Roads” have something for the permanent reader, as well as for the news seeker, and “Trilby”—to speak of an English book, is still a magnificent romance of friendship and chivalry, though it expired of its

own success as a bulletin from the Latin Quarter and a document in hypnotism.

Are we doing a similar injustice to works of art today, by asking of them only a temporary service? How many of us will read a novel or a poem more than once, or will go several times to the same play? How many young writers care to aim at such an audience, who ask of art the privilege of entering themselves into the novel or poem or play, of living the lives of the characters, of falling in love with hero or heroine, of hating the villain, and of repeating this experience with deeper emotions on each re-reading? The future of our literature is bound up with such questions. We shall have plenty of stories of the studious or psychological kind, plenty of philosophical or social minded novels and poems, but that is not enough; we must have the opportunity to reach experience in our own imagination, and do our own thinking about it. The author's point of view, if presented apart from life or with life only as an illustration of it, is after all nothing but news. We read a book by Mr. Keynes to get his latest ideas on the economics of the Treaty, or a book by Mr. Shaw to see what he will say next, or one by Winston Churchill, once an artist, to see whether we share his opinion

of the churches or his guesses about immortality; but to art we return to meet old friends like Tom Sawyer or Leatherstocking or David Harum or Doctor Lavendar, to be with them, to come under their influence, to reflect upon their fortunes. I thought I saw such art in "The Age of Innocence", but most of my neighbors read the book as a sort of Baedeker of old New York, to catch Mrs. Wharton in mistakes of information. Now I think I see such art in Joseph Anthony's "The Gang", which I read with pleasure the more undisturbed because my neighbors find in it no news at all, and therefore leave it alone.

Thomas L. Masson

For nearly thirty years Tom Masson was the Managing Editor of "Life". He watched it through various phases of humor and propaganda. He knew the writers of light and of heavier verse, the artists of gay or of poignant sketches, the fashioners of new anecdotes, the cullers of old. This short, slight, wiry Connecticut Yankee, who peers at you through large and heavy spectacles, has probably read, written, and planned more jokes than any other living human being. His voice is as dry and as sharp as his wit. Now, when he is not editing his department, "Short Turns and Encores", for "The Saturday Evening Post", he sits out in New Jersey and busily writes essays and short stories. For such a quiet little man to have been the cause of so many riotous laughs seems odd. I have never heard him laugh loudly himself—just a soft, short, nervous, almost apologetic laugh, as if it seemed to him a sin really to laugh at a thing which might not be as funny as it should be. However, there is always the

twinkle behind the glasses. Like "Surrender Books" his essays are often quiet bookish observations, usually with a quaint viewpoint, developed and explained by several thousand rambling but delightful words. His acquaintance among American writers is unlimited, for there is no man so dull that he does not like to consider himself funny; and I fancy many a lay reader of these paragraphs will look back with a blush to the time when Tom Masson rejected, or perhaps accepted, a whimsical or at least a would-be amusing manuscript.

SURRENDER BOOKS

THERE is a class of books that nobody apparently has ever thought of grouping before. Yet they have a very definite place in the mind of each one of us who is devoted to reading, and to know what they are is to have information of great value. They are what I may term surrender books. And presently I hope by example to explain them very definitely.

Of course, lists of books that one ought to read always vary according to taste, and nothing indeed has involved so much controversy as what these books should be. There cannot in the nature of things be any

uniform method of selection, this always depending upon individual taste, previous education, heritage, environment, etc. But it seems to me that it is possible to create a new standard which deals with surrender books alone, and I should think that lovers of books generally would be fairly well agreed as to what these are. We may expect differences, but not the violent differences we have observed among those who just make lists of the best books.

What then is a surrender book?

By "surrender" I mean that power a book has over you to make you surrender yourself to it completely. There are plenty of good books that do not have this power. It is also true that many of the books that do have this power are not necessarily novels. The surrender books indeed are in a class by themselves—as I have hinted, a unique class quite apart from anything else in literature. I possess a few of them, and I would not part from these books for anything in the world that I can think of. I cannot, however, explain them definitely all at once. I can do so only little by little. If I should attempt to make a complete definition of a surrender book, you would immediately begin to qualify it; yet it is quite definite, when you understand the conditions.

A surrender book is one that carries with it a complete atmosphere. It is just as if the author had the power to invent a world of his own, in which there is nothing superfluous, and from which, when you once get into it, you do not want to part. Furthermore, all the outside world has left you; nothing else matters. The power to do this is a distinct power; it appears to me to be a peculiarity of some authors. It may not be the highest power. But there it is—a quite definite thing.

A surrender book is one that we are quite content to be let alone with. It is not necessarily an exciting book, which, so to speak, acts upon us like a disease. It may have that quality, and yet it may not. "The Count of Monte Cristo" is a surrender book; it has its imperfections, but it qualifies. And also, in my experience, so does James Ford Rhodes's history of the United States. Mr. Rhodes first got together the materials to make his world, then he assimilated them, and after that, by the peculiar power I have referred to, he created his illusion. When you step into the first volume, you are living over again, with him, the history of your country. He has made an atmosphere for you; you are carried along by it, it envelops you completely. You don't care

much what happens outside. I suppose, indeed, that it may be said of a surrender book that it has the power of hypnotizing you. Now the same thing is true of Jane Austen as of Mr. Rhodes. I am aware that there are people who don't like Jane Austen. Mark Twain couldn't abide her. He ranted when he mentioned her name. He said that any library would be a good one without the works of Jane Austen in it. But Mark Twain's literary judgment wasn't worth a whoop. There is nothing superfluous about Jane Austen. She has the power of making you feel that you are there, moving about, guided by her fairy wand, and not caring to be anywhere else.

I should say after all that the quality which enables an author to produce this illusion is one in which he is able to inspire our immediate confidence. If you are at the circus and you see a trapeze performer hesitate over his act, you are at once filled with nervousness about him. Every moment that you view him is an agony. But if he shows that he is perfectly able to control himself, you view his performance with pleasure and serenity. This surrender power is due to the care with which the author has written his book; but this is by no means all. Many an author who has taken infinite pains is

deadly dull, and irritatingly accurate. Neither is it due to a dramatic quality. Some authors, who have this dramatic trick, are constantly leading up to climaxes which absorb you at the time, and yet you have not surrendered as a whole. You still retain your self-possession, you are still looking and have one eye on the outside world.

I confess that I have often tried to define this surrender quality in such a manner that I would cover it altogether and have not succeeded. The best thing I can do is to give examples.

"Vanity Fair" for instance is not a surrender book; there are parts of it altogether too detached. This does not detract from its glory; only, it doesn't happen to be that kind. For surrender value I should much prefer "The Newcomes", but Thackeray is not a perfect type of a surrender author. Neither, on the whole, is Dickens. He carries you off your feet; he bangs you up against the wall; he certainly absorbs you; he is like a contagion. But think of Parkman and his stories of conquest and Indians. Here, by that subtle alchemy of which I have spoken, you are immediately carried into another world, with swift and sure touches. After you have once read, as an instance, "Conspiracy of Pontiac", how dif-

ferent is everything. To me the supreme pleasure of reading, after you have gotten through a surrender book, and it has become a possession, is to want to live it all over again. Nothing but high genius in writing has the power to enable you to do this.

Perhaps the biggest books in the world are not the surrender books. Neither Shakespeare nor Plato nor the Bible could qualify. There is a sense in which they are too big. There are, of course, stories in the Bible that have great surrender value. A reading of Shakespeare may easily be an absorbing occupation. I remember when, as a boy, I read his plays for the first time, their story value fascinated me, held me. But to meet these three works and come finally to enter into them and understand them requires a long experience with life. Indeed, it is not until we approach the end of life that, as we ponder over them, their great beauty and their profundity almost overawe us.

If you are a natural born reader, however, you can begin at almost any time to collect surrender books. "Les Miserables" is one of them. This is what Walter Scott might call a big bowwow surrender book. You must lead up to it almost with fasting and prayer; especially in these days, when a snatching of newspaper headings, and a fitful flitting from

magazine page to magazine page, weakens one's sense so of true literary values. I read "Les Miserables" when I was convalescing from a long illness, when my mind had been swept clean. It was a wonderful experience. But I suppose the most wonderful surrender experience in the world would be to have nothing to do but to read Balzac through.

And think of some of our modern authors in comparison with these surrender books I have mentioned! They make one shudder with their mosaic qualities, with their utter inability to transport you anywhere without your sinking on the ground and resting every few moments. I have in mind some of our more recent books where I felt as if I were obliged to hold up the author's words all the time, as I went along.

You say of some books: "It takes him so long to say anything."

But that isn't quite it.

It took Victor Hugo long to say some things, but how well he said them! And while he was saying them you forgot that he was saying anything. You were moving along with him, almost without being aware of it. Think of the flight of Jean Valjean! Has the surrender value of that part ever been equaled?

Hugh Walpole

The egotism of most authors stalks in front of them as they enter the room. I have yet to discover such a thing round about the person of Hugh Walpole. He is the most modest author I know; yet, somehow, the most confident. He believes in his books; but he does not expect you to believe in them. If you do, he is glad. If you do not—well, then, there will always be another book, another chance for you to believe. Walpole is tall, broad-shouldered, practically always smiling. He has a wide forehead. He wears glasses. His platform manner is excellent, and he speaks, as he writes, with care and distinction. Walpole's work is rich in background, as well as in a rare understanding of humanity without an overlarding of the sentimental. He is wise, tolerant, and youthful in his freshness of interest in life. He was born in Auckland, New Zealand. He is a son of the Bishop of Edinburgh. As a boy, he lived in America and attended a private school on Washington Square. While an undergraduate at

Cambridge, he wrote two novels. One of them, "The Wooden Horse", was his first published story. Before this, however, at the age of twelve, he is said to have written a novel concerning Guy Fawkes for the delectation of the family cook. For a time he worked as a journalist on "The London Standard". Now, both in England and in the United States, he is the greatly popular young novelist of recognized worth. His attitude toward America is far more cordial than that of most English writers. Any differences of opinion he regrets and, as can be seen by his little tiff with Mr. Mencken, he is anxious to act as mediator. Socially popular, invited everywhere in London and New York, the real Walpole, I imagine, is the one who secludes himself in the little Cornish village of Polperro, walks among the fishermen, works long and diligently on his novels.

AN OPEN LETTER TO H. L. MENCKEN

MY dear Mencken,
I have been intending to write to you for some months past a personal and private letter with nothing more urgent in it than an affectionate greeting and a strong appeal to you to come over here as soon as possible

and share my excellent Irish whisky, but there have been certain utterances of yours in "The Smart Set" during the past few months that have led me to make this letter a public one, because the matter of it seems to me of general interest.

I know that you are set tight in your own opinions like a toad in its hole, and you know how greatly, in the past, I have admired many of those same dogmatisms. It is only because I admire so greatly your critical mind and feel that you are doing a most important work for English as well as American letters, that I write to you as I do. There is little hope of changing you, but it is time that someone on this side of the Atlantic challenged some of your absurd views about the English novel and, above all, about English contemporary criticism.

In these recent numbers of "The Smart Set" you have returned again and again to the main charges; one, that the English critics are engaged in a sort of conspiracy against the contemporary American novel; the other, that the same English critics are busied with log-rolling in connection with their favorite novelists. You make distinct charges, for instance, that no American novelist, save Hergesheimer, and Edith Wharton, is treated with any respect over

here: that is, that we deliberately and of malice aforethought despise and condemn James Branch Cabell, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Floyd Dell, Ben Hecht and the rest, and that we praise the works of, in your opinion, poor novelists like Frank Swinnerton and Michael Sadleir, and neglect the genius of such an author as W. L. George. You also imply that the American public is paying too much attention to the contemporary English novel and is neglecting the brilliant new American novel now arising. Why, you ask, should the Americans flatter the English in this way when the English so utterly neglect the American?

My dear Mencken, it is really time that you paid a visit to this happy little island of ours. I should be very sorry indeed were you to come just at the time of my visit to America. I look forward to eating, if not drinking, with you in Baltimore, but even at the risk of missing your most engaging company, I do beg you to come over. I regard it as a matter of the utmost importance that the English and American novelists should just at this time go hand in hand together. There is a new American novel of the greatest interest and individualism, just as there is a new language. It has already certain characteristics most definitely

of its own, yielding nothing to past tradition, English or other, standing strongly on its own feet, the most interesting movement, I think, in American letters of the last fifty years.

There is no reason however why, because of this new and splendid phenomenon, the American critics should decide that the American public has no more use for the English novel. The more individual and distinctive the American novel becomes, the more different will it be from the English and the more enjoyable will both be in comparison and in friendly rivalry. It is quite impossible, for instance (to take one or two recent examples), for any Englishman to father such books as "Main Street", "Moon-Calf", "Miss Lulu Bett", "Cytherea", or "Three Soldiers", just as it would be equally impossible for "To Let" or "Dangerous Ages" or "The Death of Society" or "Crome Yellow" to have come from an American talent. Surely this is a good thing. Instead of both countries producing, as they were engaged in doing twenty years ago, insipid historical romances that might have come from anywhere, the younger generations of both peoples are now working on their own grounds, cultivating most happily their own gardens.

That brings me directly to your charge that the English critics are neglecting the more recent American novelists. You except Edith Wharton and Joseph Hergesheimer, so I will not speak of them, only hinting in parenthesis that if you imagine that Hergesheimer's art is European rather than American, you are making the greatest mistake of your young critical life; but is it true for a single moment that Cabell, Booth Tarkington, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Miss Cather and the others are passed over here? That their novels do not command great sales here is perfectly true. For some reason, the American novel presents English readers with conditions that are very difficult for them to understand. Part of the difficulty is beyond question this problem of the new American language. Take "Main Street" or "Three Soldiers" or "Moon-Calf", and you will find pages of those books peppered with phrases that to nine Englishmen out of ten are quite unintelligible. When you get to the words of Don Marquis or Ring Lardner they might, for most English readers, be just as readily written in Russian or Chinese. But it is not only difficulty of language. American conditions simply have no parallel in this country. The majority of Englishmen have not visited

the United States, and many of those who have been there have penetrated no farther than the wilds of New York and Chicago.

Such a book as one of the very finest of all American novels, "My Antonia", is simply not intelligible to the ordinary English reader, and the small sales of "Main Street" over here are entirely due to the fact that we have nothing in our country at all parallel with the cultural conditions of your own small towns. It would be in many ways much better for us if we had.

That these writers are critically neglected, is simply untrue. You mention Cabell's name. The limited edition of "Jurgen" that John Lane published over here has been one of the great successes of the autumn. The 3,000 copies of that edition were sold out within the first fortnight, and book-sellers are besieged with requests for it. That book had columns of reviews in all the leading literary journals. The only important paper that treated it with contempt was "The London Mercury", whose notices of fiction are by far its weakest section. "Figures of Earth", which has just appeared here, has again been treated with the most serious attention. Sherwood Anderson has hitherto been presented in England by his weakest work only, and it is not the fault of

the English critics if they do not yet realize how considerable an artist he is. Such a book as Ben Hecht's "Erik Dorn" has not, I think, yet been published here, but in any case you would not, I imagine, wish to have that represented as the finest flower of American contemporary genius. Booth Tarkington has had critical attention here for years. "The Narrow House" by Evelyn Scott received any number of reviews, and "Miss Lulu Bett" was greeted with the greatest enthusiasm.

The fact, however, remains that the American novel is at present dealing with conditions unknown to the English reader, while the English novel is speaking of manners and customs that have been known for generations to American visitors.

I come to your second charge, which is that the English reviewer is a fellow of small cliques and coteries who is engaged in praising only the works of his own set. Never was there anything falser. You instance certain names, Frank Swinnerton, Michael Sadleir and others. The fact of the matter is that there is a very wholesome tendency among English critics here to knock any novelist on the head as soon as he shows signs of getting above himself. This is an admirable and most natural instinct in .

human nature, peculiar not only to the English. You will remember that Henry James in some articles in the "Times" just before the war collected certain young novelists together and either patted them on the head or rapped them on the knuckles according to the way in which you interpreted his rather mysterious prose. In any case, he gave them undue prominence, they having but just then chipped the egg, having the whole of their young literary lives in front of them. They have suffered from this paternal blessing ever since, and in their case, at any rate, there have been no logs rolled. Neither W. L. George nor Frank Swinnerton was mentioned by Henry James. Mr. George has had, it is true, some severe criticism for his last two or three novels, but that is because they are provocative and argumentative, they were pacifist in tendency during the war, and have on one occasion at least been concerned with backgrounds that were not perhaps the atmospheres in which his talent could work most naturally.

Frank Swinnerton, until after the publication of "Nocturne", had universal praise from the critics. After "Nocturne" he became a public figure, a definite representative of the younger English novel and therefore a legitimate Aunt Sally. "Coquette",

one of his very best novels and certainly one of the best English novels of the last ten years, received a very mixed press indeed, and you are quite wrong if you imagine that he is being praised unduly. He is working most wisely in a small corner of contemporary English life that he knows absolutely, that is his own by right of mastery, and if you think "Nocturne", "Coquette", "On the Staircase", and "The Happy Family" are poor novels, I can only reply to you that you don't know the English life of which he is writing.

As to Michael Sadleir, of whose "Privilege" you spoke with a contemptuous sniff, there has, in his case, been no conspiracy to praise. The reviews of that book were very divided. I would not have expected you to be in sympathy with it. It is a romantic work both definitely and deliberately, and has for its most ancient ancestor the highly colored Mrs. Radcliffe whose fiction I suspect you of never having read.

But these are mere matters of opinion. What I want to say to you is that there is no evidence anywhere of log-rolling in the reviewing of fiction in England today. With regard to modern poetry I am not so sure, but I can speak there with no authority.

What it comes to, my dear Mencken, is

that we want you over here for a little while. Aren't you conscious yourself of an increasing tinge of provincialism in your critical utterances? Don't you really think that there is plenty of room for the contemporary English and American novels to walk hand in hand? What we want over here is some definite authority who will speak to us about the present development of the American novel. You're the man for that. Come over and help us. I can promise you a most cordial welcome.

Yours ever,

HUGH WALPOLE.

H. L. Mencken

That a violent critic should ever prove other than the most mild mannered of men is unthinkable. Mencken, the bitter, the cynical, the terrible, is in reality a large, healthy, Germanic figure who lives in a white house with green blinds in Baltimore, his home town, with his mother. He is thoroughly domestic and exceedingly fond of beer. There you have him! He is clever in his speech, though not so quick to the attack as his co-editor, George Jean Nathan. His complexion is florid, his manners sturdy, his gestures broad. His life has been devoted to journalism and to a hearty public dislike of American politics, and the more obvious "booberies" of the American scene. Yet he is an earnest ballyboo for such idiosyncrasies as the so-called American language, on which he has written a huge tome which must have involved much painstaking research. He is, in the main, anti-British, though he seems to have enjoyed himself when he was in London last season. At heart he is a sentimentalist. This he has learned

to conceal; but he has never been able to destroy all copies of "Ventures into Verse" published in 1901. That and the quality of "The Smart Set" poetry betray him. As a critical force he has had large influence in molding the younger writers of America. He is often a champion for uncompromising realism. He is far more interested in life problems, however, than in the technique of writing. By nature a philosopher and a politician, he has become by accident an editor and critic. With his co-editor he is now engaged in a new venture, the establishing of a new monthly magazine, "The American Mercury."

MR. MENCKEN REPLIES

MY dear Walpole:

The facts, alas, confound you. During the past year I have reviewed exactly 25 novels in "The Smart Set", setting aside mere notices. Of these, 7 were English and 18 were American. Of the English novels, I anointed 3 with praise, or 43%; of the American novels, 9, or 50%. Two of the English novels I denounced as garbage, and 5 of the American—28.5% and 27.7% respectively. Regarding two of the English

novels and four of the American I was in doubt—28.5% and 22.3% respectively.

Certainly these figures show no chauvinistic bias. I receive about 350 novels every year—a great many more than any man could read. I pick out for review those that seem most likely to be interesting or significant. Is it remarkable that an American should find $2\frac{4}{7}$ times as many of these among American books as among English books? What English reviewer, in the other direction, shows a score so high, or even half so high? Or so close a correspondence between the two series of percentages?

The log-rolling I complain of has its chief scene in the United States, not in England. It takes the form of extravagant efforts to promote the American sale of books by Englishmen of a small group, most of them bad. It is carried on partly by publishing houses dealing in English goods, and partly by touring propagandists and literary bagmen. It is aided by certain American journals that practise a puerile and slimy Anglophilism. It has become a public nuisance, and when I deal with it at all I treat it as such. The English opinion upon which it is presumably based seems to me to be incompetent, and, in part at least, disingenuous. It is a body

of opinion that is ignorantly and incurably anti-American.

I need not tell you, my dear Walpole, that when I chance to take a hack at such a fraud it is done without the slightest messianic purpose. I am entirely devoid of public spirit, and it would give me no more joy to see log-rolling stopped than it would give me to see baptism by total immersion stopped. But it diverts me to chase mountebanks, and so I occasionally yield to the vice. Now you jump into the arena and get in my way. Back to your place! Specifically, back to the bar under the grandstand, where I'll be delighted presently to join you and drink a *Humpen* with you, for you are not a mountebank but an honest artist (as I have more than once declared in print), and you no more belong among the zanies I pursue than I belong among the syndics of the Y. M. C. A.

I refuse absolutely to talk about the American novel when I get to England, or about anything else so depressing. But I have some amusing scandal for you, and you may rest assured that I'll not neglect your Irish *Schnapps*.

Yours ———

H. L. MENCKEN.

Charles Henry Meltzer

A dramatic critic who flayed John Drew in his youth and has reached a mellow old age without losing his enthusiasm for carping over fine points in the theatre, Charles Henry Meltzer is a dignified figure. His contact with both American and continental theatres has been long and intimate. Born in England, of Russian extraction, he is an accomplished linguist. He has written plays in French as well as in English. He has made many opera librettos. He has acted as foreign correspondent for various New York newspapers in numerous foreign capitals. He was dramatic and musical critic for both the New York "Herald" and "World." A precise yet entertaining gentleman, meticulous, courteous, widely read, a type that one does not often meet in theatrical circles of today.

SARAH BERNHARDT

I AM old enough to have been under the spell of Sarah Bernhardt when she was in her prime; and young enough to have kept

the enthusiasm which she awoke in me till the last days of her long life drew near. To most reviewers of the hour here in New York, with their near backgrounds, Bernhardt has sometimes seemed a tedious legend. But to those of us who were fortunate enough to applaud her at the Théâtre-Français on great nights gone by, she will be always dear and an unfading glory.

It is not, though, to the actress who has passed on to another stage that I ask permission to pay tribute—the poor tribute of a friend who knew her closely, at her best and worst, and who, despite her human faults and human frailties, admired her always and believed her a great woman. Beside her even Duse, a rare artist, seems rather trifling to the writer of these lines. While of the “stars”, so called, to whom most here bow down, who has a scintilla of her brightness?

She was an artist, of the finest, highest kind. But she was first a character—a woman of compelling will and force, individual, all herself, a burning flame. Incidentally, but only in a small way, she was in turn sculptor, painter, and writer. She had invented several plays, some of which were never acted, while one was seen and rather well received at the Paris Odéon. She had also now and then dashed off some

novels. Of these the last, I think, was "Petite Idole", published here last year as "The Idol of Paris". It is largely autobiographical.

If any person in the world has proved the truth of the perhaps misleading dictum which defines genius as the art of taking infinite pains, Bernhardt surely has. She was an honest, tireless, never resting worker in her chosen field. Her art was the one god she always worshipped. And to that art she gave up all her strength. She had no patience with her many gifted rivals who were content with being charming and inspired. Unless they worked to make the utmost of their gifts, she would condemn them. Thanks to her patience, her intelligence and honesty, her artistic honesty, when she was seventy she could still delight her audiences. Behind all her most amazing exhibitions, we could perceive the great technique which made them possible. Her technique helped her to the very end. It overcame, at times, the tragic handicap of an actress who had lost one of her limbs. It enabled her, only a few years ago, to play the death scene in "La Dame aux Camélias" as touchingly as in her early days. Her devotion to the technique of her art shamed our young "stars". But our reviewers only saw in her

—a woman: a woman maimed and aging, and not beautiful, perhaps, who fought with passion to retain her envied queenship.

For she had been—and she still was—a queen. I can recall a certain night when Paris crowned her, and when the critics of New York, at my petition, sent her a message to express their admiration. And I remember her reply—the gracious telegram in which she thanked them for their tribute. She was not young then. She was growing old. Yet her vitality and will were so surprising that for almost twenty years after that night she kept her grip on Paris. Not till a year or two ago, indeed, did she begin to realize—or to confess—how old she was. When I last talked with her, in her familiar home near the Place Wagram, I noticed that she was ceasing to disguise her age. White locks were mingled with her tawny hair and, to my sorrow, she was slightly hard of hearing. We lunched together. She was full of life, as usual. She talked of everything: the stage, the world, and art. She referred to Charlie Chaplin and to Arbuckle (who, she protested, was too fat to be a criminal). But I could see that it was only by an effort that she kept pace with life. The coquetties and graces which had charmed me many times at her own table were less natural. And

they all vanished when a retainer came to carry her upstairs—poor tortured soul—on a chair or litter. I turned away then, for I dreaded to embarrass her, but she rebuked me, saying, "Oh, you needn't mind me!"

She had been a friend to me, and in her way an ideal, since my young student days at the Sorbonne. And when she chose, she could be a kind friend. Yet caprices were not foreign to her nature, and, if it pleased her, she could be a dangerous foe. She never, I think, wholly forgave Duse for challenging her supremacy, or quite forgot what she regarded—even if she did not say so—as Duse's ingratitude. It was at Bernhardt's theatre (then the Renaissance) that Duse had appeared for the first time in Paris. Soon after that, the two "stars" had been parted.

However tragic she might be upon the boards, in private—with her friends—Bernhardt dropped tragedy. She had the gaiety and lightness of a *comédienne*, though only twice, in great ways, did she reveal this fact—in "Francillon" and in "Frou-frou". It was a privilege and joy to be her guest, as I have often been. To her the theatre seemed a part, not all, of life. When she was touring in this country, she would miss no chance, if her train stopped here or there, of getting

out and driving madly through the neighborhood, till "All aboard!" was heard and she rode on again. Her interest in life was inexhaustible. It was not confined to drama or to those other arts in which she played her part. It embraced religion, science, sociology, politics, and literature.

At our last meeting, she presented me with a copy of her novel "Petite Idole", which she had written "*pour passer le temps*" when she was "resting" in her Belle Ile seaside home. "Read this," she said. "I think you will like it. Much in the book, as you will see, concerns myself."

I have not forgotten many other things she said to me, especially as to the folly, as she thought it, of allowing oneself to cease working before one was exhausted. At eighty or thereabouts, the most popular and remarkable journalist of his time in France, Emile de Girardin, had announced to her his intention of retiring. "Don't do that", she had answered, "or you'll—die!" But he persisted. And he lived six weeks.

No matter who might be the guests she was entertaining—royalties had foregathered with her—when she was due at a performance or a rehearsal she would leave them. Art and her public meant much more to her than royalty. Once, when I was among her

visitors at Les Poulains (her first Belle-Ile house, off the coast of Brittany) she received a telegram. It reminded her that she had promised to be present at the unveiling of some statue in the north of France. In a moment she began packing. Next morning we were whirled away in a dreadful express train to Paris. A promise of that kind was not mere piecrust to this spoilt tragédienne.

Her leisure? Well, she spent it in reading plays, in writing stories, or in painting, studying parts, and toying with sculpture. She had a quick wit and she liked amusing anecdotes. Her humor helped to sustain her in adversity.

Adversity. It dogged her. Even in the heyday of her career she was in financial difficulties. She had been "sold up" in one of her Paris homes—in the Avenue de Villiers. Her possessions had been scattered. She was constantly in debt. For, though she had earned millions, she had spent freely. Money was much to her. Yet she treated it as if it meant little. I am told (I do not know how truly) that, but for her indebtedness to the United States Internal Revenue Department, she would have returned to America, for the last of her farewell tours. It may have been just as well that she did not return.

Time was, in the days of "Le Sphinx" and "L'Etrangère" at the Théâtre-Français, when it was Sarah Bernhardt's wish, they say, to be buried at Père-la-Chaise (where she now rests), next to her long popular comrade and rival, Croizette. Later we heard that she had determined she would prefer her tomb to be erected on one of the huge rocks on the dark coastline of Belle-Ile. There the roaring waves and peeping sea gulls would have sung to her an appropriate threnody. And there, perhaps, long after those who loved and applauded her had gone to their accounts, pilgrims would have stared and wondered at her monument.

Abbie Farwell Brown

A meeting at the Boston Authors' Club is something to remember. The faces one sees are largely of New England. It is as if one had stepped back to a different period when English blood in America had not quite so great a foreign infusion. In this Colonial, or perhaps Victorian atmosphere, Abbie Farwell Brown is a gay, active figure. It was in this atmosphere that Josephine Preston Peabody Marks was beloved and influential. They were great friends. Miss Abbie Brown has written many books for children. She has written short stories. She has published volumes of poems. Her muse is a fanciful one. It springs from the sources of the Cambridge School. It is gentle, quiet, and not without its charm. Its place in America cannot yet be shaken by the Menckens and the Untermyers.

JOSEPHINE PEABODY, "THE PIPER"

IN the summer of 1910 I streaked across Ireland and half England on a joyful errand. I had already crossed the Atlantic

toward the same end. For it seemed to me then, and it seems to me now, that the prize performance of Josephine Peabody's "Piper" was one of the significant events in modern English letters: an American triumph in a new field.

Was it not amazing that an American, and a woman, should win a prize offered by Shakespeare's own town and open to the English speaking world, for the best poetic drama? There were three hundred competitors sending manuscripts. Imagine the astonishment of those English men of letters who were the judges when they found that "The Piper" was conceived in Cambridge (Massachusetts, not England), and that the author was the wife of a Harvard professor, being indeed that fair young poet of whom Austin Dobson had written when she first visited England:

She came to my poor garden bower,
She bloomed like a new garden flower;
I know not how the time was spent,
I know she came . . . I know she went.

The prize, three hundred pounds, carried with it the promise that the successful play should be given a performance at the Stratford Memorial Festival during the spring of 1910. I think it was this promise

that chiefly attracted J. P. For Shakespeare was the hero of her worship, and Stratford her Mecca, though she loved festivals for any sake. She had already in 1900 published a one act play founded on Shakespeare's Sonnets, "Fortune and Men's Eyes". She knew her Stratford well, through a lonely girlhood pilgrimage to that shrine. And she dared believe that her dramatic fancy, making of the old Pied Piper legend a beautiful biting arraignment of materialism, might be worthy of the high company at a Shakespeare Memorial. I believe she was confident from the first that fate was with her in this dear desire. Her self-confidence was one of her strongest assets in a life of counter-circumstance.

It was a tense year for my friend. "The Piper" was already in print, though not yet published (it was written in 1907, the year following her marriage), when she heard almost by chance of the prize offer. Having ascertained that a printed book was eligible, she sent it off, just barely in time to get by. Then came weeks of eager waiting. She heard from headquarters that "The Piper" was still among the final half dozen plays in the survival of the fittest. Then, that there was but one other rival. At this juncture J. P., as usual in a crisis, consulted her Shake-

speare oracle. The final judge in the contest was the Duke of Argyle. And the page chosen at random from "Midsummer Night's Dream" declared cryptically, "*All that I will tell you is that the Duke hath dined!*" This sounded promising. But when on his return that night J. P. showed the oracle to her husband, he turned to the page that followed, and found this, in the same speech of Bottom: "*For the short and the long is, our play is preferred. . . . And I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy!*" No more anxiety.

She resolved to be present at the performance and receive the prize in person. But the public announcement of the prize winner found her absorbed in her newest poem, a wee Lionel Marks Junior. A less spirited adventurer might have hesitated. But she took the eight weeks old baby and her tiny daughter and made the voyage alone. She confessed afterward that she almost died on the journey. But her courage never wavered.

Arrived in Stratford she met disappointment, hope deferred. For early in May King Edward fell ill, and died on the very eve of the day announced for the performance of "The Piper". All England went into mourning, of course. No chance for a spring fes-

tival at Stratford. Everything postponed till midsummer. It was to be a midsummer night's dream, after all! Meanwhile, with her two small babies, and with the gay little frocks that she loved, J. P. was obliged to go into official mourning, and to possess her soul in as much patience as a poet can summon under such circumstances.

One pleasant thing at least happened in that trying interval of waiting. Little Lionel was baptized in old Stratford church, in the very same font where Shakespeare himself had been baptized 345 years earlier. By such intimate and picturesque association between life and symbolism J. P. loved to vary the course of her earthly pilgrimage. As she once expressed it, "Every day ought to be a festival for one reason or another." Another favorite slogan was: "Let us turn routine into rhythm!" She believed passionately in life as a thrilling adventure. Tragic it might be at times, painful or cruel. But she could not for a moment have allowed it to be dull. The Piper says:

It keeps me searching. 'Tis so glad and sad
And strange to find out, What-Will-Happen-Next!

The performance itself turned out a personal triumph for J. P. as well as an artistic triumph for the play and its distinguished

actors. Marion Terry—sister of Ellen Terry, who was in the audience—took the chief woman's part, and F. R. Benson, veteran actor and manager, had the title rôle and produced the play. Violet Farebrother, Eric Maxon, and other favorites shared the honors. A brilliant audience had gathered in Stratford town from all parts of England for the unique occasion. As scene followed beautiful scene in the tender, whimsical drama, Bottom's prophecy was verified. It was indeed a "sweet comedy". Gradually unfolded the symbolic meaning of the captured children and their rainbow, the little lame boy with his winged shoes, the one mother who understood, the Lonely Man, and the selfless idealist, the Piper, bent on setting things right. The Piper was, of course, Josephine Peabody herself speaking in character

For all who wear the motley in the heart
Or on the body, for all caged glories,
And trodden wings, and sorrows laughed to scorn.

Throughout her life J. P. could truly say, as she said in this play:

'Twas not the thousand guilders that I wanted—
Life, life I wanted! Safety, sun and wind!
And but to show them how their daily fear
They call their faith, is made of blasphemies

That would put out the Sun and Moon and Stars
Early, for some last judgment!—And the Lord,
Where would He get His harpers and singing men
And them that laugh for joy? From Hamelin
guilds?

I shall never forget the surprised thrill that rippled over the tense audience when, after the play was over and acclaimed, J. P. stepped out to receive her prize in its handsome silver box. She was so young and beautiful in her white wedding gown: scarcely, I imagine, the preconceived British idea of an American *bas bleu*. Amazing her poise and gracious dignity. And when she spoke her voice, with its honey sweetness, its clear inflections void of Yankee twang, must have been still more of a surprise. She made the most graceful little speech, apparently offhand, though of course it had been most carefully considered. For she had a message to deliver. She told those British folk (there were few Americans to share my pride) what most of them probably had never thought before. That she came not as a stranger to Stratford, for Shakespeare was *our* Shakespeare, too. That we had as great a pride as our British kin in the development of our common literature. (She might well have added that our country was founded by folk who left England

just after Shakespeare died, bringing hither his idiom, still current in certain Yankee seaboard hamlets—and perhaps nowhere else.)

It was a new Declaration—not of Independence but of Heirship. They cheered her with rapture. And I feel sure that this acceptance of her dictum by at least one representative British audience was the beginning of a new rapprochement with American letters. Perhaps this victory made easier the way and more cordial the welcome to still “newer” poets who came flocking very shortly. Robert Frost, for instance, was hailed and understood and published there as early as 1912, before he was known in his own country. Why do we make so little of our literary assets, when we grow hysterical so easily over things that count for much less? Had Josephine Peabody been a Frenchwoman her proud country would never have let this victory be forgotten by anyone. Had “The Piper” been the name of a winning yacht, our cup defender, it would have captured the public imagination and have become a watchword. Had J. P. been a Marathon runner or a heavyweight champion, her success would have filled the daily press, and her recent passing (with half a dozen unfinished plays in her fertile

brain) would have sent a nation into mourning.

She achieved the climax of her "success" with that performance of "The Piper". And few persons, I doubt, have had so unsullied a triumph. Certainly I have never seen a face so radiant with happiness as was hers that night. It was no doubt a disappointment that her plays were not thereafter sought out for stage presentation by her own country. "The Piper" had a short run in New York. This and her other nine volumes are read and loved by many. But her best dramatic work in "Marlowe", nobly conceived and skilfully handled, remains still like her "Nightingale,—*Unheard*". "The Wolf of Gubbio", a moving and picturesque drama most originally developed, "Fortune and Men's Eyes", and "Wings"—each brimming with lovely poetry and dramatic effectiveness—have waited all these years for their professional chance. "The Portrait of Mrs. W." (that cleverest dramatic study in prose of Mary Wollstonecraft and her circle) is still untried after the first year of its life, which was the last year of our poet.

Poetic drama was her chosen medium, and she stuck valiantly to her ideal in the face of all temptation to more popular and lucrative

expression. At the end of her busy life she could "proudly boast, I never wrote just for money". For, as the Piper declares again:

When we sell our hearts
We buy us nothing.

The taste of her time and the physical difficulties in the way of producing the kind of play she elected to make; the prejudice of the average producer, manager, and actor, and the unintelligence of the modern audience in respect to spoken poetry—she discounted all these, and was willing to bide the renascence of opportunity for the poet with a dramatic imagination. There are some who feel that maybe the time is not distant when her plays will emerge as a fresh and delightful surprise to audiences who are tired of things so very, very different.

She was always a master of poetic technique. I don't know how or where she acquired it. But when I first knew her, a school girl, she was already publishing graceful, musical lyrics in the accepted forms. They were unusually thoughtful, if rather youthfully melancholy. She had not yet realized the power of her gayer, at times almost mischievous muse, which was quite as characteristic of herself. From the pub-

lishing of her first book "The Wayfarers", her reaction to her fellow men and women developed rapidly through a too brief but eventful life. Out of a rather detached young disciple of æsthetic and spiritual beauty, she became a passionate and militant apostle of the beauty spelled in human justice and sympathy. The whole burden of her later books was a sense of responsibility toward folk less fortunate than herself.

"You four walls, wall not in my heart!"

Though she clung to traditional poetic forms she was no reactionary in spirit. She was indeed, as one realizes with some surprise on considering the whole content of her ten volumes, more revolutionary than many of the "newer" poets. No stanza perhaps expresses with more direct simplicity and good humor her spiritual challenge to her times than this song, again of the Piper:

Out of your cage,
Come out of your cage,
And take your soul on a pilgrimage!
Peas in your shoes, an if you must!
But out and away before you're dust!
Scribe and Stay-at-home
Saint and Sage,
Out of your cage,
Out of your cage!

Keith Preston

Keith Preston is a Latin professor with a sense of humor. In my experience this is a usual combination. I have known two others, but neither of them conducted colyums nor wrote humorous verses and essays. Mr. Preston is a native of Chicago, he is a graduate of the University of Chicago, he teaches in Northwestern University. He is small, quick of movement, highly entertaining—a most diverting luncheon companion. He is an enthusiastic member of the Chicago group of writers, eats with them at their luncheons, boosts them when he can; but seems never quite to lose his sense of humor about it all. His verse is gay, pointed, graceful. His paragraphs are considered by many persons to be the best written in the country. As a story-teller he is unexcelled, though his wit has a mordant touch which is alarming in large companies. A person of great vitality, wit, and buoyancy, he yet is domestic and thoroughly tame when seen in the atmosphere of Evanston, Illinois, where he lives. In this cynical bit which

he wrote for me on H. G. Wells, he shows his colors. His laughter at the world is often a little bitter; but at the same time it rings with wholesome reproof.

THE DICKENS OF IT

SWINGING along through the ages with H. G. Wells, no more than any other reader could we pause to reflect or question. Not until we came to page 676 of the second volume of "The Outline of History" did we recall that in the back of our head a still small something had been a-troubling of us for some time. What could it be, and when did it start? After much knitting of the brows and scratching of the head, we recalled that our subliminal bedevilment had begun on page 530 of the first volume, with the following text:

If the prominent men of this or that British or Gallic city lacked any profound Greek culture themselves, they could always turn to some slave or other, whose learning had been guaranteed of the highest quality by the slave-dealer, to supply the deficiency.

Here it was that we were first reminded of the experts who had assisted at the birth of "The Outline of History" and who hide their diminished heads in the footnotes of the same. Was Mr. Wells quite respectful

to his experts? Where, in the first place, did he derive his conception of experts? This last seemed after all to be the main question, and on this we concentrated with complete success. We find that Mr. Wells owes his conception of experts to the immortal Mr. Boffin in Charles Dicken's "Our Mutual Friend".

Like H. G. Wells, Mr. Boffin had achieved the highest success in a practical line. At the peak of this practical triumph, Mr. Boffin conceived a cultural project of the first magnitude, a course of historical reading which should include the most solid and serious thought upon man, his achievements, and his destiny. Certain difficulties of time and mechanical equipment at first seemed to interfere. How did Mr. Boffin meet these difficulties? By the idea of experts. In his own words:

"Now, it's too late for me to begin shoveling and sifting at alphabets and grammar books. I'm getting to be an old bird, and I want to take it easy. But I want some reading. . . . How can I get that reading, Wegg? By,' tapping him on the breast with the head of his thick stick, 'paying a man truly qualified to do it, so much an hour (say twopence) to come and do it."

The reader must beware of forcing an attractive analogy, especially of forcing it

beyond the point where it flatters Mr. Wells. It is all very well to admire the economy of time and the enlargement of scope secured by the employment of experts, whether the beneficiary be a Boffin or a Wells. But Mr. Boffin was entirely too deferential to Mr. Silas Wegg, his expert, *with* a wooden leg.

"I don't", said Boffin, in a free-handed manner, "want to tie a literary man—*with* a wooden leg—down too tight."

Mr. Wells has tied his experts (with no wooden legs to tax his compassion) in double bowknots; he has trussed them and stowed them in the footnotes. Still more must the reader beware of applying to our author phrases used only of the expert:

"A certain loftiness, likewise, took possession of Mr. Wegg; a condescending sense of being in request as an official expounder of mysteries."

Mr. Boffin, a humble sort of person, was unable to defend himself against the arrogance of his expert. Mr. Wells, a man of independent thought, has guarded himself against expert impositions; he has sternly repressed that tendency to oppose facts against ideas which is the first and probably the greatest danger in the employment of literal-minded experts.

The legitimate applications of our analogy are, after all, sufficiently numerous. Taking the classical period, with which Boffin started, we find that both Boffin and Wells relied chiefly on Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". The set used by Boffin and Wegg was in "8 wollumes"; exact data on Mr. Wells's edition are lacking. Both Wells and Boffin were apparently familiar with Polybius, "pronounced Polly Beeious, and supposed by Mr. Boffin to be a Roman virgin". In this connection we would note that both Wells and Boffin seem to have had certain scandalous interpretations imposed upon them by their experts. In the case of Mr. Wells, this is particularly apparent in the account of Julius Cæsar.

"There can be little doubt", says Mr. Wells, "that he was a dissolute and extravagant young man—the scandals cluster thick about his sojourn in Bithynia."

Mr. Wells likewise refers delicately if not darkly to Cæsar's "amorous pleasantries with Cleopatra", hints that the hussy followed Julius to Rome, and concludes:

"Such complications with a woman mark the elderly sensualist or sentimentalist—he was fifty-four at the commencement of the *affaire*—rather than the master-ruler of men."

Now we are not so much concerned with defending the late Julius (though, hussies or no hussies, we are still convinced that he was a very able person), as we are with inquiring whether Mr. Wells's judgment in this matter accords with his judgment in his novels. Were Mr. Wells's fictional heroes subject to such discipline? Not as we remember. What is the difference between novels and history?

"The difference, sir?" says Mr. Wegg. "There you place me in a difficulty, Mr. Boffin. Suffice it to observe, that the difference is best postponed to some other occasion when Mrs. Boffin does not honor us with her company. In Mrs. Boffin's presence, sir, we had better drop it!"

The truth is that Mr. Wells, possibly on advice of his particular Mr. Wegg, or some other among the council of experts, seems in "The Outline of History" abnormally concerned with Mrs. Boffin, or Mrs. Grundy, or Mrs. Potter. Rereading our "Outline of History" we frequently feel the presence of Mrs. Boffin. Under her eye Mr. Wells has been as unfair to Cæsar, Napoleon, and some others as we, in this little paper, have tried to be to Wells. For Boffinizing history is a game that two can play at, and the reader must be on his guard against taking the results too seriously.

Mary Roberts Rinehart

Mrs. Rinehart works swiftly and she works constantly. Her life has been a succession of amazing successes; but they have come as a result of a genius for understanding the public mind, a fine ability for storytelling, an excellent sense of characterization, an unusual executive sense, and a gift of fortune—luck, if you like. Mrs. Rinehart became a nurse when she was very young. In the hospital she met Dr. Rinehart. At nineteen, she was married to him. It was not until after her three sons were born that she started writing. Her first efforts were children's poems, which she tells you were exceedingly bad. Then she wrote short stories with some success. From then on her progress has been steady. Her first novel, "The Circular Staircase", was immediately popular. She has never since written a failure. Her attitude toward the war was remarkably sane. Her work for the Department of Justice was secret, brave and successful. To meet Mrs. Rinehart in her Washington home is to see a hostess of

charm, and to hear a *raconteur* of ability. She has the rare gift of dramatizing truth so that it has the thrill of a mystery story. Fresh, dark, faultlessly dressed, with graceful hands and the deep eyes that are at once penetrating and sympathetic, she is a beautiful and a forceful woman. In "The Unreality of Modern Realism" she states clearly her literary creed. The great strength of her books lies in the fact that human beings find in them stories about other human beings like themselves, who have similar difficulties, and who find, often, a solution to life's problem.

THE UNREALITY OF MODERN REALISM

REALISM: *In literature and art, the principle of depicting persons and scenes as they exist, without any attempt at idealization.*

The quest for the ideal, the striving after perfection, is the finest single attribute of the human heart. It comprehends all the higher emotions; it differentiates man from the animal; the search for it has given him his religions, his laws, and his progress. Without it he is a creature; with it he is man created in the image of God.

So insistent has been this belief in the

ideal that it has colored all his created works. By reality he has lived. By ideality he has climbed. Out of his dream of perfection he has wrought his paintings and his cathedrals, and has written his idealistic literature. And strangely, only that which has been founded on his dream has survived.

Opposed to idealism is realism. It deals only with the tangible, the scientifically demonstrable. It discounts the visionary and the imaginative. It sees things only as they appear to the physical eye. It is neither idealistic nor sceptic. In architecture it builds office buildings instead of cathedrals, and in literature it reports life and becomes a form of journalism.

Yet the simple reporting of the life of a period is important. It may not be art; indeed, it is doubtful whether such reporting has any of the æsthetic quality of art. But it is making a gesture toward truth as well as fact. It may bear much the same relation to real literature that the photograph does to the painting; it may be the least difficult of all forms of creative writing, since it depicts life only, and not life plus. But at least it makes its gesture toward truth.

If there is much to be said for realism, then, there is not much to say against it. But there *is* much to be said against the

present day tendency to prostitute it to pure mechanism. Worse even than that, to pure materialism; the attempt to portray a three-dimensional world in two. To take the human individual of soul, mind, and body, and strip him to body and mind. And to do this in the name of truth.

Just what is the province of creative literature? To lead men on and up? To depict them as they are? Or to drag them down? To hold forth the ideal of perfection? To give a surface interpretation of life? Or cynically to depict life as cheaper, more drab, less worth while than it is in actuality?

Granted that a writer sees life only as cheap, drab, and not worth while, is it his province to spread broadcast this conviction? The writer has a much greater responsibility than merely the egoistic attempt to interpret the world about him in his own terms. The ruthless iconoclast, destroying ideals the world has carefully preserved, is the Hun of literature. What if the fabric be built of illusions, of happy misconceptions, of small vanities and prides? Are not these the fine hypocrisies by which men clothe their nakedness?

Yet it should do no man grave harm to see himself as he is. It may, indeed, be a benefit. But let the mirror in which he views himself

be an accurate one. The writer, reflecting mankind to itself, may do so without protest, providing he reflect accurately. If the realism be truth, then let us have truth, and neither a portion of it nor a distortion of it.

To write life without idealization may be only a portion of it. It is at least a failure of responsibility. But to write life cynically is a distortion. Cynicism is not truth. It is insolent self-righteousness. It has a contempt for the virtues and generosities. It is pessimistic, despondent, astigmatic. It has a biased view. Seeing crookedly, it sees a crooked world.

Yet perhaps a healthy cynicism is an excellent antidote for smugness. It is only when cynicism masquerades as realism that it becomes dangerous. And that this is the underlying principle of much of the realistic fiction of the day a careful study will corroborate. Not truth, but an unhappy, warped, and incomplete view of life. Not only an emphasis and exaltation of the material as opposed to the spiritual, but a cynical denial of the spiritual.

This is not realism. True realism would see in the human individual something more than the creature of his environment and the slave of his physical body. It would yield

him his abject surrenders, but grant him his kinship with God.

That there has arisen, then, a mainly young, frankly cynical and disillusioned school of writing is a grave commentary on the times in which we are living. Its followers are honest in their convictions. They are writing life as it appears to them, without uplift, without much hope. They will not cater to the public taste, which has cried for happiness. They maintain, and they are right, that life does not deal in happy endings. But life is a fluid thing. It has its high moments and its low. Neither one does more than come and pass along. From the standpoint of reality one is as incorrect as the other. It is from the standpoint of cynicism that they choose the low note.

In their desire to avoid idealization, too, they are sometimes as guilty of underdrawing as the wildest idealist is of exaggeration. Not life, nor life plus, but life minus, must be charged to their account. And here again we have the misplaced emphasis. They are obsessed not only with the ugliness of life but with the importance of *things*. They stress the life of the body, insistent and often sordid, and with a sort of indecent honesty they violate the sanctuary of the human

mind, and expose it in print. It is analysis, not synthesis; it is dissection, not creation.

But the dissecting room deals with disease. Have we no health?

Is it extraordinary that there has arisen, in a frantic effort to restore the balance, to paint the high lights in the picture, a school which goes to the other extreme and with exasperating smugness cries that all is always well with the world? Giving us cloying sweetness to take the bad taste of this one-sided realism out of our mouths?

The saddening part of this rising cult of non-idealizationists is that behind them lies more conviction. When they write us morbid, introspective, and materialistic books, it is because they themselves are morbid, introspective, and materialistic. There are no hypocrisies for the makers of books. As an author is drab or colorful, sordid or gay, so will his book be. If he does not feel, the emotion in his book reveals itself spurious. If his view of life be jaundiced, the book will be jaundiced, and more than that, may turn a multitude liverish over night. If he sees, in the group he is depicting, only their frailties, their miseries, only their frustrations, it is because he himself is frail, miserable, and frustrated.

There is no such thing as the complete

detachment of an author from his work. His subconscious mind is stronger than his will.

Possibly this is a phase that will pass. Certainly we have no survival of non-idealistic literature from the past. Men do not preserve their failures, but they do preserve their dreams. And the great dream of the world is the movement toward perfection. The reach of the human hand and soul toward something above and beyond it is the only progress. Any cynical theory of life which teaches that this reach is futile and absurd is pernicious. And any theory of life which does not show that this reach may fail its object and yet have gained by its aspiration, is a denial of fact.

Any attempt to depict life by things, to emphasize the material at the expense of the spiritual, any conception of the human soul which sees it only groveling and not aspiring, may be two-dimensional truth. A part of the truth. But it is not life, and it is not necessarily art.

There is one hope, however. Cynicism is a fault of youth. Here we have a young school, and young writers. When what Hugh Walpole calls the Gloomy Clever Ones have mellowed with experience; when they have lived and suffered; when they have found that they may write life from a ma-

terialistic angle but that they cannot live it without ideals, nor help others to live it; when they have learned that a dead cat in an alley is not only a stench but is also a pitiful thing; when they have discovered that every man has moments when he ceases to be the thing he has made himself and becomes the man God made him—then we shall have a school of great realists.

Hildegarde Hawthorne

Mrs. John Oskison (Hildegarde Hawthorne) is a daughter of Julian, a granddaughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne. She is a brisk woman, with a deep throaty quick laugh and snapping eyes. She knows personally most of the successful writers of America and regards them with friendly if somewhat seeing eyes. She seems to be a woman without poses and with few prejudices. She has been a book reviewer for many years, and she has published volumes of travel and occasional essays. She is conservative in her estimates of books; but she has long watched the psychology of the reading public and she understands it about as well as any human being can. Her clever analysis of Harold Bell Wright's place among American writers is proof of this. She carries on the New England tradition without wearing it hung from her bosom by a chain. A woman worth knowing, she is, whose judgment on what's good to read is not to be neglected.

THE WRIGHT AMERICAN

IN the canteen I ran in France there was a bookshelf containing some twenty or thirty volumes, a haphazard collection made up of the leavings of units passing through, of a small boxful obtained with difficulty from Y headquarters, and of occasional wandering volumes arriving from across the seas. The boys patronized the shelf eagerly enough, and most of the time it was almost empty, volumes of religious advice being the sole survivors of the demands made upon it. But though practically everything in the nature of a novel or story went well, I soon came to know that ten out of a dozen of the boys who asked for a book would say first:

“Got anything by Harold Bell Wright?”

If I had, they took it. If I had not, they took anything else. It was Harold Bell Wright against the field, with Wright winning every time. There were only four of his books in my library, and they were on the go unceasingly.

Now, I had never read one of them. Neither had anyone I knew—knew, at least, in that old life which seemed so far away and long ago during the war. Practically everyone in that literary past had told me how bad they were, how fearful was the Eng-

lish in which they were written, how false, vapid, and sentimental were their contents. And I wondered at the passionate longing for the things displayed by the American doughboy in his thousands. And not only the doughboy—the officers, when they dropped in to see if there was something to read, usually made the same request.

“They may be darned good fighters”, was my thought, “but they certainly have a mighty poor taste in literature.”

There, of course, was where I made my mistake. They had no taste at all for literature. Literature was not what they were after. They were not even seeking a just estimate of human nature or of life. Probably none of them had so much as a streak of the artist in him, and to appreciate literature there must be a trace of that creature in your makeup. As to their fellow men and life as they met it, they doubtless sized up both in a manner satisfactory to themselves. What they wanted when they read—well, was what they found in Harold Bell Wright.

What did they find, what are they finding, in his work?

One morning I asked one of the boys, a lad from a small town in Pennsylvania who had brought back the last of the four, having read the rest one after the other, why he liked

Harold Bell Wright so much. He was not used to expressing his critical convictions, but finally he came out with:

"I don't know as it's the story so much, but you see, he kind of gets at what I've tried to think about, and writes it so's I can get hold of it. And he sure does know a lot of nice American girls!"

At the time I thought no more of the problem of Harold Bell Wright and his vast public. There were other matters to be attended to.

Yet there is something interesting here. Something it seems worth while to pursue. The war is long over, the doughboys scattered. But all over America Wright's latest book is being read by hundreds of thousands of copies. Remembering my experience as a librarian in a Y hut in France, I feel sure that a large proportion of this public is young men—young men who don't care very much about reading any other books.

Wondering on the subject, I read this latest book myself. It was the first one of Wright's books that I had read, and judgment on an author should not be passed on the authority of a single volume. But I am not seeking to pass judgment; what I want to do is to get an explanation. I think this one book will suffice for that. The book

is not a book for me. It doesn't hold what I seek in a book. But it is not addressed to me. It is, however, addressed to America; and America takes it to her heart with enthusiasm.

In reading the story I found that the criticisms passed on Wright by people who had never read him were inaccurate. The English he uses is good English. Good, clear, strong English, with no taint of fine writing. Nor was the book false or vapid, though it did not escape sentimentality. But the sentimentality had nothing of the gross or maudlin. It reminded me of the sentimentality I have met in small town people who have had no wide contacts with life, and who accept face values as realities—a mother is to them something inherently noble and selfless, for instance, and even the fact that they have personally known bad and selfish mothers will not modify this preconceived stand. Such persons are shrewd and alert enough in the affairs of daily life, but they have a certain number of rubber stamps passing as beliefs, and become beliefs for them. There is a great deal of this sort of sentimentality in America, and possibly elsewhere.

It is not this that makes Mr. Wright so popular in his country, however. There are plenty of books written that are ten times

as sentimental as his, and which have no vogue at all; books that tell more thrilling stories than he tells, too. For it is not the story they tell that makes them to be demanded. These matters help, but are not *it*. No. As I read, I remembered what the Pennsylvania boy had said. He had found thoughts which he had tried to put into words himself, tried to get clear in his mind, doubtless, expressed by his author, expressed so that they became his own, expressed as he would like to have expressed them himself.

The average American is not a thinker. He does not reflect upon life. Books that are written for those who do think, who do reflect, plays that are produced for such, do not interest him. They are not in his field. Now, Wright is not a literary man. He does not wish to be one. But he does reflect upon life, upon the obvious life with which the public comes into contact. It is not individual experience he seeks to express, it is not the growth of character in conflict with life as it is found in this or that man or woman. Mr. Wright is a preacher. What he wants to do, and does do, is to expound basic problems of right and wrong in a manner that will reach the greatest possible number of persons. He works toward this

with the utmost sincerity and in the clutch of an immense conviction. He has a theme to teach. And he believes to a passionate degree in America and the American, believes that if only certain things can be set right, then our ship of state, our nation, will make the port of the millennium or something almost as good. There is a moving quality in a belief like this, a beauty; it is certainly one of the causes of Mr. Wright's tremendous popularity.

Let there be no mistake as to Mr. Wright's quality as a workman. There is nothing ill considered or sloppy in his methods. When he has finished a book he has put into it the best work of which he is capable, and taken an infinite amount of pains. He gets his basic theme first, as clear as possible in his mind, and hangs on to this until it begins to call for exploitation. Thereupon he sets to work at his foundations, making a pattern of his idea, with its darks and lights, its good and bad, its conflict and outcome. He chooses a symbol that shall express the main thought of the book. In "Helen of the Old House", for instance, he wished to make clear that coöperation between the men who work and the men who think is necessary in this world. So he has for his leading character a man who is a helpless cripple but who is

wise, full of love and justice. Associated with this man is his friend and servant, a creature strong physically, but mentally weak and undeveloped. Between them they work out a satisfactory existence, and influence the entire book. In this way Mr. Wright plans out his sermon, presents his lesson. His characters are chosen to exploit his theme and he selects them, not for their human value, but for their value in putting into story form the theme in his mind. Last, he proceeds to write his book in a manner that will appeal to the largest possible public. He wants the shopgirl and the clerk, the factory hand and the traction man, the cowboy and the village postmistress to read it, and he writes it in the way he believes they will like best—he writes it to meet the popular taste.

You may say that this is not the way of an artist. To this Mr. Wright retorts that a man who succeeds in his aim, who puts his idea into a form that will appeal to the public for whom he writes, even though that public is numbered by the millions, is still an artist. He is attacking problems that beset his readers, putting them into words that they have not for themselves, thinking for them the thoughts they want to but do not know how to think. He is a preacher

of democracy speaking to a public obsessed by bread and butter problems because it has to be, and trying to show the best road to the solution of the difficulties of these problems; he is speaking to a public that prefers types to individuals, and that wants in a book the kind of story that it wishes for itself. If this writer is criticized by another public for not proceeding in a manner which would alienate this special, this large audience, the criticism is based on a misconception of the entire affair.

Wright's solutions are sane, sound, and kindly. The guidance he offers is safe. He has horse sense and his appeal is to horse sense, perhaps slightly sublimated. If the young American is reading him, he is reading what will help to clarify and steady himself. Also, it is to be remembered that many of those who read him are not readers at all, in the broad sense. If he did not write they would read nothing. But reading him, they begin to form the habit of reading, and in time they will take another book than his when one of his is not to be had. In fact, he is training readers in a nation which, in spite of our multiplicity of papers and magazines, is emphatically not a nation of readers.

He is making thinkers too. Don't be too

ready to laugh at that. He may not make you think, but you are a mere fraction of America. If you want to know America in the bulk read one of Wright's books, and try to get back of it to the men and women who ask for him in their millions, who want him because he expresses what they need to have expressed. Wright understands them, and he may help you to understand them. They have nothing to do with literature and its standards, but they have a whole lot to do with America and her standards. Wright's creative energy is directed toward them, and the book he writes is a mere instrument to his end, shaped to fit it to its use. That is why he is so popular: not because he cannot give a literary public what it cries for, but because he can give his own public what it really needs.

Arthur Bartlett Maurice

With a memory for literary facts that is overpowering, Arthur Bartlett Maurice has long been known to the book loving public for his "Chronicle and Comment." This was famous in *THE BOOKMAN* years past, and now appears in the literary supplement of the New York "Herald", which Mr. Maurice is editing. It is his wont to remember obscure facts about the authors of a generation past, though he, himself, is a youngish man. He has written books of such reminiscings as "The New York of the Novelist", "The London of the Novelists", etc., etc. For sixteen years he was connected with *THE BOOKMAN*, for nine of those he was its editor. His contact with writers was constant and broad. He brought to the magazine at a time when the United States had not awakened vividly to an understanding of its own writers, the charm of enthusiasm and personality. Mr. Maurice is an indefatigable worker. He pursues a literary fact with eagerness and purpose. Usually he downs it. He has an exceptional editorial sense. From a jour-

nalistic standpoint his supplement is the liveliest in the country. Maurice is a Princeton man, and a loyal one. He spends much time there. He was, in fact, born as well as educated in New Jersey and has lived for some years in East Orange. Mr. Maurice is an able editor and journalist, a rapid and engaging conversationalist, a companion of rare wit and charm.

A LANDMARK PASSES

THE Pension Vauquer is no more! Till yesterday, the structure which Henry James felicitously described as "the most portentous setting of the scene in all the literature of fiction" had, for a full hundred years, remained substantially true to the picture that Honoré de Balzac drew in the pages of "Père Goriot". The house and the garden with its well and graveled walk were there for the contemplation of the literary pilgrim. Over all there was the brooding silence of ten decades. But that was yesterday. There is little silence there to-day. For where Trompe-la-Mort whispered his cunning temptations in the ear of Eugène de Rastignac; where Goriot, the Lear of French fiction, wept over the ingratitude of his daughters; where, of an eventful evening,

there came the tramping of feet, the clang of muskets against the pavement, and the ominous command: "In the name of the King and the Law!" now honks, not the horn of regal Renault or pompous Panhard, but the horn of the ubiquitous Ford, or of its French equivalent, the Citroen. The "most portentous setting of the scene in all the literature of fiction" has become an auto-service station.

"Mme. Vauquer (*née de Conflams*) is an elderly person, who for the past forty years has kept a lodging house in the Rue Neuve-Sainte Genevieve in the district that lies between the Latin Quarter and the Faubourg Saint-Marcel". These are the opening words of the novel that posterity seems to have accepted as Balzac's masterpiece, the most glorious stone of that vast edifice which is the *Comédie Humaine*. The house stood at the lower end of the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Genevieve, just where the street begins to slope down to the Rue de l'Arbalète. Balzac, in his day, found the quarter the ugliest and the least known of all the quarters of Paris. Ugly and unknown it remained all through the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. To find it to-day is like finding one's way to the heart of a maze. That remoteness had the virtue

of preserving it till the last from the invasion of the modern Hun, the apartment constructing architect. Ugly as it is, it possesses an amazing fascination. With the dirt and squalor and gloom the glamour of the dark old world is there. Here is no Haussmannized Paris, but a vestige of the ancient Lutetia that knew the Valois. The shades of the Villon of history and of the Quasimodo of Hugo's fantastic imagination, lurk in such streets as the Rue Saint-Médard and the Rue Mouffetard.

Balzac identified the Pension Vauquer as being in the Rue Sainte-Genievieve. But the names of Paris streets are subject to frequent changes, and long ago the Rue Sainte-Genievieve became the Rue Tournefort. The actual number of what was till yesterday, by reason of its unchanged state, its romantic appearance, and its vivid associations, the show place among all the shrines of French fiction, was 24. From that doorway Eugène de Rastignac went forth in the night to make his way to the heights of the cemetery of Père Lachaise, and from its eminence to shake his fist at the city spread out beneath him with the ringing cry of defiance: "A nous deux maintenant!"

Arthur E. Bostwick

One of the best known librarians in America, Arthur E. Bostwick, is also editor, encyclopedist and author. White-haired, tall, powerful, kindly, he has a sense of humor that is dry, keen and tempered by years of wise study of life. Is there any better way to study life than through mankind's approach to books? Dr. Bostwick was born in Litchfield, Connecticut. He spends his summers there now. He was graduated from Yale University, where he was also a post-graduate student, an instructor and a proctor. In his editorial capacity he has been associated with "The Forum", "The Literary Digest" and various dictionaries. He is now chief of the St. Louis Public Library. His books are numerous. I have seen him address a large group of his fellow librarians, and he has the courage to tell stories on them as well as about them. He has been active in his interest in politics, religion and the public efforts of various communities. A serious-minded citizen

whose interest in books is abiding, and whose knowledge of them is profound.

THE CHURCH AND THE LIBRARY

THERE was a time when to be literary was to be ecclesiastical. Ability to read was sufficient proof of exemption from the jurisdiction of the civil courts; collections of books were exclusively housed in buildings subject to ecclesiastical control—churches, monasteries, colleges. Literature owes its preservation to the church of the Middle Ages, and the church, in its turn, drew much of its vitality and influence from its connection with letters.

This state of things no longer exists. Literacy is not for the clergy alone, but for the citizen. The state teaches us to read, and it assembles and distributes books. Schools and libraries are still maintained by religious bodies, but we are agreed as never before that everybody must be able to read and that illiteracy is a disgrace to the community where it exists.

Thus the public library has become a lay concern. It has little to do with the church, and the church, with some exceptions, does not heed it. It is the great neutral public institution, storing and making accessible

recorded opinions but favoring none. And the odd thing is that in so far as it ignores the church the library is nullifying in one place its latest step in advance, which is to work with, in, and for groups within the community; while by turning a cold shoulder to the public library the church is refusing to make use of one of the most powerful aids that could be offered her for the fulfilment of her mission.

The modern library began to work with groups when it began its work with children. Since that day, quite within the memory of most of us, it has taken on teachers, the foreign born, the industries, business men, hospitals, the military service, and many others. Group service has been rapidly and successfully extended until it forms a network over the whole field of the community.

Contact with groups has been facilitated both by the feeling that initiative in service could properly be assumed by the library, and by the discovery that library service by no means ends with the provision of books or even of material in print, that it is a matter of social contact. Many librarians have become so thoroughly adjusted to the social contact of the library with groups that they are almost ready to throw overboard the old name of library al-

together, and consider that they are conducting community clubs, whose chief aim must be to encourage mental contacts and reactions, and to store and distribute what must always be the chief tools through which these contacts and reactions are made effective—namely, books.

The purely experimental manner in which this group service has developed is evident from the fact that no comprehensive plan of it has ever been made. The group closest in contact, and therefore the one that was pressing hardest, has always been the one to receive attention—to be given room, supplies, and service. The groups that were already fairly well able to take care of themselves did not need, of course, to exert this pressure, hence service was extended to them later, or it still remains to be extended. Now the churches have always been among our best organized groups, and they have themselves felt, equally and at the same time with the library, the impulse toward socialization. The institutional church is the response—it is an American response, just as that of the library is. The older heads are as much scandalized to see dancing and eating, and community singing and politico-social discussion going on in the churches, as they were to witness the same

things in libraries. It is because the church and the library have thus moved on parallel lines, that they have been so long in coming into contact. A denominational body, however, is limited on all sides in this social effort, in a way that can never be felt by a public institution like the library. In the last analysis every man has his own religion, just as he has his own philosophy—his mind is an isolated point in the field of belief. Churches are groups of these points so near each other as to feel sympathetic attraction. Some day we may have this sympathetic nearness throughout the whole field. Until it exists, we must rely on other means to get minds and spirits into universal contact, and this means the public library is now furnishing to a greater extent than either churchmen or non-churchmen yet realize.

There is one valuable piece of work that can be done by church and library together, and that is to labor for Christian unity. I do not mean by this a state of things where all Christian bodies think alike or do alike, much less an organic union, but a condition of affiliation, acknowledged or not, where they are willing to work side by side. There are not wanting plenty of practical evidences that this kind of unity is already here in some degree, and that more of it is on its way.

There is the University of Toronto, an aggregation of denominational colleges—Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Baptist, Methodist—each a residential and teaching institution, while the university itself gives all the degrees and instructs in purely non-religious subjects such as mathematics or logic. There are the religious houses going up in connection with many of our western universities. Originally social in their nature, a combination of dormitory and club house, these are beginning to assume also teaching functions, with the consent and approval of the universities. For example, Wesley House at Urbana, Illinois, an admirable and beautiful collegiate structure, is about to offer religious or semi-religious courses, for which the University of Illinois will give credits. The war drives, in which Catholic and Protestant bodies took part jointly, will occur to all. The library cannot afford to be left behind in such a movement, and indeed it has itself been a pioneer in some localities. The New York Public Library has several branches that originated as church libraries—both Catholic and Protestant—and sensibly no effort has been made to remove the religious element. Why should we not cater to strong regional church groups as well as to regional groups of in-

dustrials or scholars? In St. Louis one of our sub-branches is the Catholic Free Library, given over to our care by the Archbishop himself. I see no reason why branches should not specialize in Methodist or Unitarian literature. They do in Jewish literature, through the accident that the Jews are a racial and to some extent a linguistic as well as a religious group. One cannot well purchase a Hebrew collection without buying works on Jewish faith and practice. This is to a lesser extent true of other linguistic groups in which the overwhelming majority are of one faith, as with the Greeks, the Russians, the Italians, or the Spanish.

The odd, the almost unbelievable thing is, that most religious groups in this country seem to be as unaware of the public library as we are of them. I will make but two exceptions—the Roman Catholic and the Christian Scientists. The Roman Catholics have been active in public library matters ever since I have known anything about public libraries. They have operated public libraries of their own and they have not hesitated to affiliate with tax-supported libraries, or to become merged in them. There are Roman Catholics who shun the public library or who look askance at it, but of those who seek it and work with it, as I have known them,

I must say that their attitude has been liberal. They object to violent or scurrilous attacks on their faith, and ask to have books containing these removed from the shelves. I do not blame them. But they do not want a purely religious collection.

The Christian Scientists apprehend the library intensively in limited directions. They have committees whose business it is to see that all libraries are well supplied with "Science and Health", and they encourage the purchase of some other books. I have never known them to protest against the presence in a library of attacks on their faith, although there are some pretty stiff ones. But they are very persistent in their objections to the classification of such attacks under Christian Science. There is something to be said in favor of such a view, but so long as we put critiques of Comte under positivism and agnostic treatises under religion, we shall have to treat all controversial books in the same way. Occasionally a high-church Episcopalian will object to our use of the word "Catholic", or to our treating pre-Reformation liturgical material as if it belonged only to the Roman branch of the church.

Outside of these evidences of religious interest, I have never known, from my library

contacts with readers, whether they were Baptists or Mohammedans, Buddhists or Methodists. I account this a fault of my own. It is strange that the religious group is the only body that the librarian has not gone out to seek with some activity. We long ago ceased to blame plumbers, or manufacturers of textiles, or Hungarians, or business men, if they did not use the library. We are recognizing that such failure is our failure. It may be theirs too; but we can mend our own ways rather more quickly than other people's, and so we soon learned to go out after these gentry and to return with more or less willing bunches of them. But who ever heard of a librarian going out after a Methodist, or a United Presbyterian, or a Congregationalist? The very suggestion makes one smile; and yet some of these are quite as good game as engineers, or aviators, or students of Gaelic.

Here I may anticipate an interruption: "How about the Sunday Schools?" We have long been treating Sunday Schools as groups, but not as religious groups. The old Sunday School library was a joke. In my boyhood, "Sunday School book" meant unreadable, mock-pious stuff of the variety turned out by the ton from the mills of the Society for the Promotion of Christian

Knowledge in London, and from other similar ones in our own fair land. This type of library is not yet extinct—more's the pity—but it has been altered or greatly modified, largely, I believe, by the influence of the public library. In some cases the part of the library devoted to general reading has been abandoned, the children being sent to the public library. In others, the type of book distributed has been improved. So far, however, the influence of the public library has been away from religious instruction rather than in aid of it. I see no reason why the Sunday School group should not be given the aid that is not withheld from other groups, and why a branch library should not contain a small collection of instructional religious works. These would include general titles and also books for the special use of the denominations whose churches are in the immediate vicinity. This might well form part of a general effort to supply more books on denominational subjects.

Our libraries are generally deficient in religious reference books. We buy lists of English peers and of American dealers in plumbing supplies, but we neglect the official clergy lists of our churches. Every library of good size should include what I may call the official literature of each church—its

yearbook with a list of its clergy, its fundamental law, whatever that may be termed in each case, its statement of doctrine, its liturgy if it has any, and its authorized book or books of hymns. If extended to all the principal denominations this collection alone would constitute a very respectable library; its limits, of course, will be determined by the necessities of the case. Most of it may be bought once for all; the annuals should be purchased as they appear. To these should also be added, however, considerable unofficial material: the history of the denomination, the lives and chief works of its principal divines, plans and descriptions of some of its noteworthy church buildings, and so on.

Much of this will introduce the librarian to men, doctrines, and events that he never heard of before, although probably they are no more remote from his ordinary life than the contents of Maxwell's "Electricity" or a grammar of the Gaelic tongue. We buy these, not because we know and appreciate them ourselves, but because somebody else does. When we think that the religious groups are worth attracting and attaching as well as the electricians and the philologists, we shall at least divide our attention.

All these things will be parts of the

library's contribution toward Christian unity, as I understand that much abused term and as I am using it here. The first thing that we need, here as elsewhere, is a survey of faith and order; and with all the work done toward unification of Christianity, I cannot see that this has ever been touched, perhaps not even sensed as a necessary element. Yet how can we reconcile Presbyterian and Baptist, Protestant and Catholic—nay, look abroad and ask how we can bring together Buddhist and Mohammedan, Tao and Shinto, unless we know what now separates them? Much of this is on record, but it is nowhere assembled. What Christian bodies believe in justification by faith? Which have more than one order in the ministry? Which are Congregational in government? Which have bishops? Which believe in the apostolic succession? Do all accept the Apostles Creed exactly as most of us recite it? I need not go on. The fact is that no one Christian body knows exactly how near or how far it is from others. It fails to recognize its closest neighbor.

The first step toward a general, intelligent recognition of points of agreement and difference is the assemblage of material, and it is such an assemblage that the library would be making, if it should proceed as I

advise. I do not advise for this purpose filling the shelves with controversy, and buying works intended to convert Protestants to Catholicism and Unitarians to Methodism; but I do think that we ought to have the facts. It is a fact that a body of persons believe in a stated thing, whether that thing is true or not; and for purposes of record, of survey, these facts we must and should have somewhere.

Of the inspirational literature of religion, I need scarcely speak. We are less derelict in our duty here, probably, than in any other branch of the subject. Much of it is not denominational—it is merely Christian. It is in the realm of feeling rather than in that of reason that men first get together. Here we have already the Christian unity of the spirit. “The Imitation of Christ”, “The Pilgrim’s Progress”—these and a hundred other religious classics we have on our shelves already. Yes; and what do we do with them? Will the librarian who recommends to a reader the “Journal of John Woolman”, of which she herself never heard until we knew that dear old President Eliot liked it, recommend also “De Imitatione Christi”? If not, why not? Did any librarian ever urge anyone to read the Bible? Must we not force ourselves to realize that religion

is qualified to bear a larger part in the lives of most of our readers than even the Theory of Groups or the fate of the Lost Digamma? Even Mr. Wells, who thinks the American Civil War of only sufficient world significance to warrant the expenditure of a paragraph, and Abraham Lincoln as not worth mention, spends many a page on Buddha, and Mohammed, and even on Jesus Christ. No, religion is still a world force! Librarians cannot be the universal educators—the union of social forces—that they aspire to be, without working with it and toward it. If there is

One far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves,

the library must perforce move with it.

Aline Kilmer

In "The Bookman Anthology of Poetry"
I wrote the following of Aline Kilmer:

"The first night that I met Aline Kilmer was at her house in Larchmont, just before the children, Michael, Deborah and Christopher, went to bed. Kenton was away at school. It was these unusual children who moved with quaint grace through her early poems. Fair-haired, wide-eyed, with the movements of an elf and the shyness of a faun, little Michael is like a cherub stolen for an earthly visit. I had only just met the father, Joyce Kilmer, shortly before he entered the army, and had just missed seeing him again in France shortly before he was killed in action. The children have inherited their mother's gentleness and wistfulness, and their father's dreaming eyes. It is a family over which there seems to fall the beauty, mysticism and faith of the Roman church, with an especial benediction."

This worried her. She likes to be considered more practical than I have made her seem to be. She is. A good housewife, and

a hard working one, too, an earnest student, a whimsical essayist, and, in the main, not a dreamer. However, any sketch of Aline Kilmer must include a description of that very unusual manner of hers, that quite undeniable charm, whether she likes it or no.

ON WORKS OF REFERENCE

LALAGE, who lives with me, is occasionally moved to bitter lamentations. Anyone who lived with me would lament bitterly on occasion. As a philosopher I can realize this without undue heartburning. But I claim that Lalage is unreasonable in doing this, because she does not lament those things that are really lamentable.

Her chief cause of complaint is that my library contains no works of reference. In vain I tell her that I have a dictionary, the finest of all dictionaries. She only asks me coldly to produce it, and I—I cannot. And she will not accept my unsupported word. I am unable to produce the evidence because of all my books that dictionary is the most butterfly-like. It settles now here, now there, and remains so short a time in each place that Lalage, who has lived with me for eight months, claims with apparent sincerity that she has never seen it. When I

have seen it myself I cannot say that I have paid much attention to it except to experience a pleasantly possessive thrill. I never consult it. I never need to. Usually I can grasp the meaning of an unfamiliar word by the context and as for spelling—well, I am a good speller. On those rare occasions when I really need to look up a word, my dictionary being so much the will-o'-the-wisp, I have a better and more informative way of looking it up. I take some book that I feel sure will somewhere or other contain the word and I read through it until my search is rewarded. In this way I refresh my memory of books that I have read and even sometimes read books that otherwise I never should have read.

Recently I have been informed that this practice of mine is one of the many admirable methods of the Chinese. To find the proper use of a word they search the classics. If that word does not appear in the classics, so much the worse for the word. It dies.

From the actual use I have made of my dictionary I have got little but sorrow. Many excellent words are ruined by too definite a knowledge of their meaning. There is the tragic case of "hectic". I had always considered it a highly expressive word. I had used it joyously for years to

mean a convenient combination of "nervous", "excitable", "feverish". One ill-starred day I looked it up and I have never been able to use it since. Its actual meaning is so far removed from its meaning as used by me and the vulgar generally that I cannot even remember what it was. No one could be expected to remember it. It simply has nothing to do with the case.

But it is not only a dictionary that Lalage would have me possess. She thinks I should have an encyclopædia. Now this is really the height of folly. She knows that I have not sufficient room for those books that I already own. An encyclopædia is ugly and cumbersome. Also it is an expensive thing.

And to an encyclopædia there is the same serious objection that applies to most works of reference. It is too practical and too detailed. What information the average human mind might conceivably be able to grasp is smothered under a mass of technicalities and so lost.

I have, for instance, read the article on navigation in an encyclopædia. It was, doubtless, sound and, as such articles go, well constructed. Far be it from me to offer any impertinent, half baked criticism upon it. But the fact remains that not one shred of it clung in my mind. What knowledge I

have of seamanship, and it is ample for my needs, I got from "The Hunting of the Snark". From a work like that you learn indelibly. You learn with the Bellman. In company with that intelligent but untrained gentleman, I never knew whether an east wind blew from the east or to the east. It is not a thing one can easily inquire about. One might safely guess at it if it were not for the technical terms. The phrase "due east" is certainly confusing if not deliberately misleading. But after one reading of "The Hunting of the Snark" the truth is fixed in your mind.

I do not think I am peculiar in this. Is there anyone who has not learned more history from historical romances than from the pages of histories themselves? I believe not.

It might be possible, with a little research, to draw up a list of such substitutes to fill the places of all dull reference books on library shelves. Dozens of delectable ones flash into my mind. But I hold my hand because if I presented this list I should then be in the despicable position of having perpetrated a work of reference. This I have vowed I shall never do.

So I claim that Lalage is unreasonable. But I think privately that it is better so.

Unreason never annoys me. I have with it unfailing patience. If Lalage came to me and complained that my housekeeping compared unfavorably with that of Mrs. Jellyby—if in these benighted days there are many who do not recognize Mrs. Jellyby I am glad of that, because they won't know what I mean—if she pointed out that I begin a thousand things that I never finish, if she showed me that though I am potentially a capable person I never accomplish anything, she would be perfectly right. Reason would be all on her side. But then I should be very angry.

Floyd Dell

Floyd Dell was born in Barry, Illinois; but literary Chicago claims him as her own. He is a slight, shy, sensitive man, essentially the poet in temperament; but turned irrevocably novelist. His education, which was never formal after early high school days, is broad, and in some respects, deep. A voracious reader, he has taught himself what many academicians do not know how to teach: the ability to think constructively. His training as a writer began with reporting days in Davenport, Iowa. Later, in Chicago, he became associate, then editor of the Literary Page of the Chicago "Evening Post." Since then he has been connected in one way or another with "The Masses" and "The Liberator" but he likes to feel that his active editorial days are past, and that practically all of his time can now be devoted to work on his novels. His critical viewpoint is well shown by the essay I use here. As a novelist he is more emotional. Any one of his three stories displays that. He is a conservative by nature, I believe,

but intellectually a radical. He believes, however, that "politics have nothing to do with letters". For that reason he has turned his political ideas into channels of literary criticism. Dell is keen, fearless and just. For a time he was somewhat biased by his great interest in psychoanalysis; but even this is wearing off and he has again become the thoroughly tolerant and wise young man. He is a born parent, and though he has his own son to instruct, he still enjoys the rôle of preceptor. To this position, however, he does not elect himself, and those who seek his advice are fortunate.

CRITICISM AND BAD MANNERS

WHEN I was twenty-two years old, and had just become the associate literary editor of a Chicago newspaper, I had a painful experience. The year was 1909, and in that year Hamilton Mabie, Richard Watson Gilder, and Henry van Dyke still set the standards to which American literary culture conformed; Dreiser had been suppressed and was, by all but a few, forgotten; Mencken was just beginning to be heard of as the writer of a caustic column in the Baltimore "Sun"; Sinclair Lewis had just graduated from Yale and got a job as a reporter

somewhere; and Sherwood Anderson was an advertising man who dreamed of writing a novel. In those days Winston Churchill represented the sober dignity of literature to the American public. And in poetry—well, nobody paid much attention to poetry anyway, in those days; there were real poets, such as Vaughn Moody and Anna Hempstead Branch, but they were overshadowed by the colossal fame of James Whitcomb Riley. The voices of Vachel Lindsay, Louis Untermeyer, Ezra Pound, Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, Edna St. Vincent Millay, were yet to be heard. And it was in connection with poetry that the painful incident I am about to tell happened to me.

There was an American poet—and I hope he will forgive me for telling the story—who shared the universal neglect accorded to poetry at that time, and yet, or so it was said among those who knew, was an authentically great poet. He had been acclaimed abroad. Foreign praise has always weighed heavily in the American scale of critical opinion; it weighed with me. It happened that I had not read any of this great poet's works; but I was prepared to be his American discoverer.

At this point, through a friend, the poet himself heard of my interest in him, and sent

me a complete set of his works, each volume being inscribed: "From an older to a younger poet." Here I must confess that the poet had been shown some of my youthful verses, and was reported to have praised them; and perhaps it was his good opinion of my poetry which made me so ready to have a good opinion of his.

Then—alas—I read his works. They represented, to my mind, the banal old; and, whether or not they were as banal as I thought, they were certainly unlike what I wanted American poetry to be. And I found myself in a painful situation. If I wrote what I thought about this poet, it would be bad manners; if I refrained from writing anything at all, that would be cowardly; and if I wrote anything less than the truth, I would be in league with error.

The result was that, with a feeling of desperate heroism, I wrote the whole truth, as I saw it—mercilessly, and at considerable length; two columns of damnation, as bitter and incisive as only a young critic in a virtuous mood could make it. I hate to think how the poet must have felt, reading that review without any preliminary warning!

I can find many excuses for my young cruelty; but they amount to a plea of ignorance. Not that I think I was wrong about

the poet; at least, the younger generation of critics agreed with me, and among us we blazed a way for the new American poetry. I do not go back on my youthful opinions; but I do regret my youthful manners, and I make in my behalf the plea of ignorance.

I did not know how it hurts to be criticized like that, for one thing. I have learned since then. Furthermore, I did not know how great an advantage a reviewer has over an author. The young reviewer feels—at least I did—that he is St. George attacking the Dragon. But that is scarcely the case. The Dragon of Error is usually a well meaning old Dragon; and St. George is not merely, as he thinks of himself, a boy from the provinces who must needs exert all his powers—he has, in his newspaper, a modern machine of efficient destruction, and he is really firing from a battleship upon helpless villages. The authors haven't newspapers to fight back in; and besides, it is not their business to fight back.

I did not realize, then, that it is no crime against truth and beauty to write bad poetry or bad fiction. Goodness knows, the bad writers, no less than the good ones, are usually dedicated to truth and beauty, as sincerely as any young critic. They are doing the best they can. Who—including

Harold Bell Wright—would not be glad to write a book which the young critics would place in the pantheon of literature? And who—including the late Henry James—would not have been glad to be able to write a best seller? One writes what one can.

This is not an argument for the abolition of criticism, nor for a false and sickly tolerance of bad writing. Sincerity in criticism helps to produce sincerity in creative art, and I flatter myself that my own young critical brutalities, of which I have given an instance, have had their share in the bringing to birth of a new and more sincere American literature. At the same time, I think that all criticism is motivated by jealousy and envy: the critic is a critic, usually, because he has not yet had the opportunity to do creative work himself; and he is able to be generous to creative artists only when he recognizes in their work something akin to what he wants to do himself, so that he can feel in such a writer an ally and not an enemy in his own prospective campaign. These motives are, of course, hidden deep below the level of consciousness; but they are there—and they have their origin in fear. The established writer fears the emergence of a new taste which will reject his work and leave him without an audience;

he fears the younger generation that comes knocking at the door, and, with honorable exceptions, he sneers at the younger generation's queer and different literary beginnings. But in precisely the same way, the younger generation fears the older—fears that the public taste will never change, that its own talents will never be recognized and rewarded, and that the Old Gods will reign forever; hence, in every organ of opinion which it can initiate or capture, it sneers at the older generation, and calls the productions of that generation by every bad name in the critical vocabulary.

It is human nature to be afraid; I am not complaining of that; but what I object to is the "rationalizing" of these fears, their elaborate justification by critical theory. It would be much better if we admitted the fact, and proceeded to deal with it as we deal with other fears, by social methods which tend to mitigate them. These social processes all fall into the general category of manners.

It is desirable, in the first place, that writers should, to some extent, know each other personally. It is sometimes objected that personal acquaintance makes honest criticism impossible. That is not true; it merely makes ill mannered criticism more

unlikely. One cannot recklessly impute all sorts of vicious motives to a writer with whom one may presently have lunch; one is, in fact, required to criticize, and not merely malign, his works. It is my opinion that honest criticism, of the most unfavorable sort, is consistent with a degree of courtesy which would not interfere with agreeable personal relations between author and critic. Every writer has the experience of finding that some of his best friends do not like what he writes; but their friendship usually remains unimpaired, because the traditions of friendly intercourse require that this dislike shall be expressed in a friendly way. Your friend, in giving you his opinion in private, is under no obligation—as the unknown newspaper critic seems to be—to make you out a complete ass or an utter scoundrel. As a matter of fact, you are neither, and the friendly criticism is usually far more to the point than the newspaper denunciation.

The generations move swiftly in these days, and I, who am still a member of a younger generation which has just begun to get a foothold in the citadel of public taste, find myself denounced by a still younger generation as one of that gang of tyrants and oppressors whose authority must be destroyed if literature in America is ever to

come into its own. I dare say I have incurred some of these denunciations by my critical airs of owning, together with my gang, the earth and the fulness thereof; but these airs were merely intended to impress a still older gang whom I had been in the habit of regarding as tyrants and oppressors. It is also true, doubtless, that I have sneered at some of these younger writers; certainly they have annoyed me by their tricks, especially by what seems to me a wilful unintelligibility; but even so, I ought not to have sneered. That is simply a bad critical habit which, once acquired, it is hard to get over.

In the pages of *THE BOOKMAN* recently I was guilty of sneering at two writers of a "generation" younger than my own. I did not realize that I had done so until one of them called my attention to it in a letter. "Why", he asked, "did you say that I had no point of view?" I apologized to him warmly, remarking that when critics said that about my own novels it always made me angry. An author, of course, always has a point of view, and it is absurd, as well as ill-mannered, to assert that he is such a fool as to think that he can write a novel without one. He may fail to convey to his readers, or to some of them, what that point of view is; and the critic is perfectly within his

rights in saying as much. But the critic has no right to assume that a novel which seems to him an inchoate collection of materials is anything worse than a failure on the part of the author, who certainly believed that he was presenting the public with an orderly and significant work of art. Moreover, it is honorable to fail in such an attempt; and it is the critic's business, rather than to assume that the author has been too lazy to try to write a good novel, to discover why he has failed. It is merely easier for the critic to believe the worst; and it is generally the critic who is lazy, and not the novelist.

It is, of course, an imposition upon a poor devil who wants to write novels of his own to put him at a desk before a pile of other people's novels and ask him to criticize them. No wonder he is often impatient; and no wonder, either, that lacking as yet the opportunity to make himself known to the public by novels of his own, he should seize the occasion to shine at the expense of the authors whom he is supposed to be criticizing. I have done that often enough myself to have no hesitation in attributing it as a natural impulse to other reviewers. And when I read one of those reviews of one of my own novels, I address the reviewer in

imagination thus: "Young man, you have my sympathy. It is a shame that you should have to spend your precious hours, which should be dedicated to your own first novel, upon a book of mine in which you are obviously not interested in the least. This is a hard world for beginning novelists. But have patience—remember that some of us have gone through the same mill. And besides—I am really not to blame for your predicament. *I* did not ask you to review my novel. And it is not quite fair of you to punish me for it. I do not want to keep you from writing your novels; all I want is the privilege of writing my own—a privilege which you seem to wish to take away from me. All right—you'll get a taste of your own medicine some day! Who do you think is going to review that great book of yours when you do write it? Several dozen young men who want to write their own books, and who will consider your novel merely one more affliction to be impatiently suffered. Then you'll see how it feels!"

The reviewing of books, regardless of the quality of the books, is likely to be for the young critic an agony that, to be endured, must be mitigated by some opportunity for presenting *himself* to the public. That's all right: if the book is not, in some sense, about

himself, he has no business to be reading it; and if it *is* about himself—as the most interesting novels are—he is quite right in saying so. The most entertaining, if not always the most informative, reviews are accounts of “the adventures of a soul among masterpieces”. But accounts of the misadventures of a soul among books that are not felt to be masterpieces can be very dreary and very offensive reading. If a book makes the critic angry, that is something; but if it merely bores him, why should he trouble to tell us so? A history of a critic’s boredom is itself a bore; and the critic who is bored by almost everything in the world lacks the essential ingredient of the critical faculty—a sensitiveness so acute that the critic can become excited over things which other people are too dull to notice for themselves. A habitual falling back upon the critic’s own experiences may or may not be a sign of æsthetic boredom; it all depends on whether the “I” thus placed in the foreground is relevant to the literary topic nominally under discussion. Every young newspaper man has tried the trick of handing the city editor a story of his failure to get an interview, instead of the interview. But no newspaper man has yet had the nerve to hand in a story of how he preferred to sit in the

park and watch the pigeons rather than talk to the man he was sent to interview. A good deal of "brilliant" "young" "criticism" is like that.

But while there are many excuses to be made for bad manners in the young critic to whom book reviewing is an unwelcome chore, these excuses scarcely apply to the established novelist, who is presumably not reviewing books to keep the wolf from the door. The only good reason for one novelist's reviewing a book by another is a genuine desire to say something about it. And he is dealing here with an equal whom he is under every obligation of civilized human intercourse to treat with courtesy.

I have already given an instance of my own failure to behave according to these standards, so I shall take the liberty of mentioning a similar failure on the part of another. One would not need to look far for instances. But as a most glaring example, I post up for consideration some excerpts from a review by a prominent American woman novelist, whom I prefer not to name here; though for purposes of incredulous reference I don't mind stating that the review appeared in the initial number of "The Literary Digest International Book Review."

I have always found ——— peculiarly interesting, for the reason that she is one of the few women writers of fiction with intellect as well as talent; and it has diverted me to speculate on what she would have been if she had married and had a brood of flesh-and-blood children, or if she had elected to study life and men at first hand after the manner of Georges Sand and other gifted ladies rather more discreet but no less thorough. . . .

As I have intimated before, I have often wondered how Miss ——— would have treated sex, if, instead of being a woman of impeccable virtue, she had chosen to be a *dame gallante*. Writers of first-hand experience with the vital, but nevertheless commonplace, facts of life, generally avoid erotic scenes, partly because a suggestion and an appeal to the reader's imagination is more esthetic, partly because, their own curiosity satisfied, they have no repressions or inhibitions to gratify in the act of writing. The creative faculty takes a wider range. Sex plays its part in their work as in Life. It is a mighty force, but it is not the whole thing. Therefore, I do not hesitate to believe that if Miss ——— were as adventurous personally as she is imaginatively, her striking talent would have a freer sweep. . . .

Enough!

I see that I am a member of the older generation after all. But not in my wildest youthful days as a critic would I have considered it decent to taunt a woman novelist with her presumed virginity—or a man novelist, either, for that matter! When

criticism opens its gates to such personal gossip as this about living writers, anything is possible—all standards of critical propriety are destroyed—there is no longer any protection for writers from the vulgar curiosity of a public less interested in literature than in “life”. And what will it all lead to, I ask, but red ruin and the breaking up of homes?

There are, as I can call to mind, a number of quaint facts alleged about the private lives of certain prominent contemporary writers, American as well as English; and speculations as to whether, if these facts had been otherwise, the prose or the poetry of these writers would be better or worse—such speculations would doubtless be more interesting to the general reader, trained in Sunday Supplement taste, than what has heretofore passed for criticism. Are we to expect this sort of thing? I hope not!

Zona Gale

As a person, Zona Gale is thoroughly entertaining in two distinct moods. At one moment she speaks with the accents of "Pollyanna", the next with those of her own "Grandma Bett". She is slight, delicate, pretty, shy but firm. She is quiet in her gestures and her voice is soft. She will allow herself the great pleasure of an emotional experience such as helping a crippled boy to write, and finding in him something which is, presumably, quite beyond his actual talents. Yet she has a dry, detached manner of viewing life. While she has forced herself to believe that life is sweet and beautiful, her work often shows that she knows better than that. She was born in Portage, Wisconsin, and she has lived there most of her life, except while she was at the University of Wisconsin, and in New York City working on a newspaper. She is eager, ambitious, sympathetic. She has the ability to dramatize the optimistic side of events. She is the type that champions pacifism avidly and has principles about kindness to animals.

She worked night and day in New York until she had succeeded in gaining the attention of various editors for her poems and short stories. She then returned to Wisconsin, where she remains. Occasionally she arrives suddenly in town, sees her friends, produces a play (there are two waiting in the Broadway offing now), indulges in a round of gaieties, then turns again to the native state and her charming mother. Her earlier books betrayed her most sentimental mood. "Miss Lulu Bett" and "Birth" show her at her truest. Perhaps she has been too cloistered ever to go beyond mild cynicism and surface realism. When she characterizes, she rings true, but when her characters require great emotional experience she finds herself at a loss. A writer of distinction, she has yet reached no stable ground. She is an artist only in part. Perhaps she is too much the woman to be the uncompromising craftsman.

THE NEW WORD IN PLAY PRODUCING

PRODUCING a play seems to me, as I have recently watched it, to be partly the art of dealing with people. And the new word in dealing with people is to deal with them, not to direct them.

Watching Mr. Brock Pemberton staging my play, I used to think that if one of the oldtime producers were to enter the theatre, he would say: "But this man is not doing anything. He just sits there." It was true that he seemed just to sit there, hour after hour. The director of my fears, he who stood tense or wild in the midst of the players and cried that fire from heaven had fallen on such and such a reading, or bit of business, or tempo—he was not in the theatre. Soon he will not be in any theatre. Or in any other creative work. Which means almost all work.

Instead there was, in this case, a man who sat in the house, halfway back, and who at first said principally: "From the beginning, please." Or, "Once more, that scene." And very often: "Come now. Let's all help." There also was I who in those first days kept saying to him: "Don't you think that should be read so and so?" or "That oughtn't to be done so, just there" or "That isn't the right reading." And the invariable reply would be: "Let's let them get the lines first." "Let's see if they won't come to that in a day or two." In the first weeks of rehearsal I must have said these things literal scores of times and always to that same reply, de-

livered without impatience and without a shadow of turning.

Gradually, in instance after instance, it was clear that the suggestion which I had been so eager to make was either finding its way into the reading by the feeling of the actors, or was being supplanted by something of their own creation that was better. When I spoke of this—"It means so much more when they find out a thing for themselves," the producer said.

After a time, at the close of a rehearsal, he would go down to the front row and say: "I have a few notations—will you take them down?" He would make innumerable suggestions, and the company would note them on their parts. When a member of the company asked how a line should be read the first reply from the producer was usually: "How do you feel that line—what do you feel is the most natural reading?" Again and again he asked them for suggestions. If a line needed something and I could not make the suggestion, he would ask the one to whom it belonged to try to think of the thing he would like to say in such a situation. Some of the least unsatisfactory lines, therefore, came from the company themselves.

Often it seemed to me that the producer thought of himself as one of the company.

And as if industrial difficulties might be solved if only all the coöperators in industry could recognize themselves in this way. That which Walter Hampden welcomes as "industrial and artistic coöperation" was assuredly here. It is the new word in industry as in art—the third word, the human factor. Yet in the end this play was shot through from first to last with the ideal of naturalism which all along had been the ideal of the producer—but he had developed it, he had not stamped it on from without.

This attitude cannot be unique. There must be others of the modern stage who are producing in this way, but it is not the old way, and it is not the way in which the public generally thinks of a production being made. Nearly everyone has said: "Isn't it a terribly difficult experience, having a play put on? Isn't it nervous work? Don't you have to fight for your own interpretation?" But it was not difficult. There was nothing "nervous" about it—excepting that one couldn't engage all the actors who applied for the parts. And so for my own interpretation, my fear was that they were sometimes reading a line in my way to please me when they knew it would be better some other way. I have always believed stage people to be the most likable people alive, and now I know it.

There is far more reason why play producing should be nervous work than that routine work should be so; because, first, there is no routine to follow and, second, everybody involved is in some degree a creative artist—who carries his own authority. By reason of the daily intimacy and the swift work and the high pressure and the risk for everybody, it is true that irony or arbitrary authority or lack of sympathy could make of play producing about as uncomfortable an association as any other association dominated by “nerves”. Perhaps, as Dr. Joseph Jastrow once suggested, all these things are not alone in the domain of art and of ethics but of manners. Or perhaps it is merely that theatrical producers, in common with all other business men, are eliminating waste—waste nerves along with the rest. The roots of art are fed and watered by undivined agencies. In this case I believe that the work ran smoothly because the producer was more intent on getting out of every creative worker his creative bit than in remembering that he was the director and that his way was best. He was not only directing a play—he was dealing with people. The final art.

William Lyon Phelps

Few professors of English literature have inspired the undergraduate at large as has William Lyon Phelps of Yale University. Professor Phelps humanizes literature, understands the ordinary human being's approach to it, loves a good joke and is a constant but a master punster. As a lecturer he is known from coast to coast. His word on books is gospel to librarians and club women. This is due partly to his keen sense of the dramatic. If you could sit under him at Yale you would understand what I mean. Thoroughly of Connecticut is Professor Phelps. He was born in Hartford and educated at Yale, where he has lived ever since except for summers in Michigan and a sojourn for post-graduate work at Harvard. His published volumes are innumerable, as are his interests and activities. Alive to every movement in the theatre, exceedingly fond of music, interested in young people and their efforts, he is as definite a personality in American educational and literary life as I know. His library at New Haven,

with its crackling fire, the Browning chair, Rufus the dog, and Mrs. Phelps, the always cordial hostess, is filled with undergraduates on any winter Sunday afternoon. Probably no man now living has created a love of books in so great a number of souls as has William Lyon Phelps. This is a task worth the greatest effort. It is one which needs must be prompted by enthusiasm which is a quality Professor Phelps has in the highest degree.

THE WHY OF THE BEST SELLER

THERE is no formula to fit the best seller.

The Bible and Shakespeare are best sellers, and among authors of our time, such kindred souls as Henry Adams and Harold Bell Wright are emphatically in this class, though Wright somewhat more emphatically than Adams. The novel, "Main Street", which included among its targets people who buy best sellers, is itself a best seller. The inhabitants of Main Street would seem to have a counter-weight in a balancing number of those who laugh at them. Thus, at all events, the country is safe. Complacency finds its complement in ridicule.

I admire both "Main Street" and its author; I rejoice in his success; but the

cyclonic popularity of the book—if foreseen—might conceivably have tempered its zeal. To prove that people need it as much as they apparently want it, it should circulate only among the élite and be either vaguely irritating or downright incomprehensible to the general. Instead of being caviar, it is shredded wheat. The other alternative is that there are two million five hundred thousand élite in America, allowing conservatively five readers to every copy, and remembering that the sale has considerably increased since I began to write this article. Now to believe that there are millions of the élite in America is to believe that this is indeed God's country; such a belief would put the believer forever on Main Street. The publishers do not regret the popularity of the book; and I hope Mr. Lewis has no qualms. He now has leisure to write even a better one, which he is certainly capable of doing.

Although Emerson's squirrel did not envy the mountain, that was because he was Emerson's squirrel, not a real one. Nearly everything small would like to be big. Many of the German dramatists who scorn Sudermann have unsuccessfully tried to copy his methods—so I read in the work of a German critic. There is no doubt that Henry James would have rejoiced in an enormous public, though

in his art he followed the Rehoboam method. The small colleges have their distinct and inimitable merits; of which most of them are quietly and justly proud; but a few of them advertise the benefits of smallness so energetically that if it always paid to advertise, they would lose the quality advertised, as Professor Briggs has said in his own way.

Almost every great poet, dramatist, and novelist has been famous and popular in his own lifetime. Exceptions are only apparent; either the author has died young or his best work has appeared posthumously. Let no sour author trust in posterity. Posterity is far more cruel than the contemporary public; contemporaries abuse, but posterity forgets. When an author is really great, posterity ratifies contemporary opinion. Unfortunately, however, the fact that greatness is popular does not mean that popularity is a true indication of greatness. Where a once popular author is gone but not forgotten, I mean, when he is damned by posterity, there were dissenters while he was yet alive. Remember the exalted position of Southey and remember what Byron said of him.

Leaving out the rare appearances of genius, there is always I think a discernible reason why a poem, novel, or play is popu-

lar. When somebody frowns and says, "I cannot understand why Harold Bell Wright should sell by the million," he is simply saying that he does not understand human nature. Although many individuals are cruel and selfish, the average person can be easily touched by an imaginary hero or villain—David was instantly stirred by the story of the ewe lamb, yet perhaps at that moment Bathsheba was in the room with her knitting. No critic believes that "Lightnin'" is as good a play as "Riders to the Sea", but "Lightnin'", which I am sorry to say bored me, is exactly the kind of thing that we call sure fire. It hit the centre of the bull's eye, and, as in most plays and stories, the impelling force was a luscious mixture of sweetness and melodrama. It was what people call "wholesome", which depends perhaps somewhat on the stomach. The vogue of "Lightnin'" is more interesting than the play; I mean we can learn more from it.

The two novelists whose books enjoy the biggest sales in America are Gene Stratton-Porter and Harold Bell Wright. In part they owe their circulation to the invincible sentimentality in the human breast. America has no monopoly of this emotion. These two authors are surely not inferior to the

beknighted Hall Caine, Marie Corelli, and the late Mrs. Barclay in England, to the late Georges Ohnet in France, to a hundred sloppy novelists in Germany. Every human heart has a percentage of slush. Why should we be surprised at the vogue of Harold Bell Wright when we remember the Dempsey-Carpentier fight? What must Tex Rickard really think of the intelligence of the public? Nothing like this had been seen since the days of Barnum—the expectation of millions whipped to just the right froth, so that whether the fighters were in condition or not, the public was precisely ripe for picking. It was a shame not to take the money. And how fortunate that Dempsey won, as I fervently hoped he would! If he had lost, the world would have wallowed in a trough of sentimentality. In France, the home of art and intelligence, in Paris, the home of intellectual cynicism and mockery, Carpentier would have eclipsed not only Marshal Foch, but all the poets and dramatists. He might have had any decoration. His wife and child would have come to America; it is terrifying to think of the sentimental gush that would have been slobbered on this excellent family. Carpentier is undoubtedly a good fellow and an attractive personality, and I understand that Dempsey is not popu-

lar. But for one thing we should all be grateful to Jack Dempsey—he saved us from ourselves.

I am informed on good authority that one of our motion picture actresses—not *the* one—receives weekly five hundred sentimental letters from American men. The private irregularities of a millionaire apparently interest more newspaper readers than disarmament or the League of Nations. Therefore let no one wonder at the vogue of Harold Bell Wright, and let no one waste any ammunition on it. His books are certainly better reading than the sensations just mentioned. Any one of his novels costs less than a ticket to a musical comedy, and gives more in return.

A word of encouragement to public librarians. Along with ministers of the gospel and teachers in the grade schools, public librarians form the finest class of people in America, because they do the most good. Their opportunities for helpfulness come every day, and most of them are eager to take advantage of the chance. Now their bugbear is Harold Bell Wright. Every time a boy or girl asks for Harold, they vainly try to give him something else. And their souls are filled with distress when the child walks off with Harold under his arm.

I believe it is better that the infant, whether in or out of his teens, should read Harold Bell Wright than not read at all. And surely his elders, who inhale sentimentality in other forms, cannot justly cast a stone. Wright knows how to tell a story adapted to an elementary grade of intelligence; the reader discovers that books are a permanent source of happiness; with them at any moment he may change his environment and his companions, and live in a world of excitement. After a time, he will in many instances proceed to better and more subtle books, and find happiness of a finer kind. He is in the garden of printed pages; let him not forget that the one who led him through the gates was Harold Bell Wright. My pity goes out to the boy or girl who is not brought up with books; who grows up without any insurance against life.

Personally, I have had enough of Harold Bell Wright. I have read every word of two of his books—"When a Man's a Man", and "Helen of the Old House". This "Helen of the Old House" has the ingredients nicely mixed. It is filled with dripping sentiment. There is not a single real character, no one who resembles a complex human being. Each person is put there to support the thesis—which is, that the only way out

of labor troubles is for employer and employé to work harmoniously together. An employé who strikes without good reason is every whit as bad as a German imperialist, says Harold Bell Wright; and an employer who is only a profiteer is bad in just the same way. Granted. Let us then organize against both offenders—against the corrupt capitalist and against Bolshevism. Here Harold is undoubtedly Wright.

Whatever may be this book's offenses against literary art—and I saw enough without looking for them—it is really a sermon preached on the labor question. And as his solution is correct, true statement being usually unoriginal, it is possible that many of his readers will profit by his discourse, skilfully adapted as it is to their comprehension. I believe his motive is excellent; he wishes to use his prodigious popularity to help his country and humanity. He knows well enough that the shortest cut to the ordinary intelligence is by the sentimental route, and like a spellbinder, his muzzle velocity is very high. The difficulty is that if the world could be saved by sentimental melodrama, we should have been saved long ago. Nearly all sentimental melodramas are on the side of virtue; as were the novels of Oliver Optic and Horatio Alger, Jr.

I have no particular desire to join the army of those who satirize virtue. As between virtue and vice, even in this ridiculous world, virtue actually seems to me less absurd than vice.

The case of Gene Stratton-Porter is not quite so easy as that of her running mate. The publishers tell us that nine million copies of her books have been sold. With five readers to each copy, this means a circulation of forty-five million. She is a public institution, like Yellowstone Park, and I should not think she would care any more than a mountain for adverse criticism. She does, though. Wise men know that more than half the things that appear in print are not true, and yet many have such a superstitious reverence for type that an attack or a misrepresentation fills them with real agony. Even those whose position seems immovable—Pope, Tennyson, Henry James—suffered torture when they read an adverse criticism printed in an ephemeral paper, and written by a nobody. One of Yale's greatest presidents, in the eighteenth century, saw an unfavorable criticism of his book in an English journal, and he immediately fainted away.

Gene Stratton-Porter lives in a swamp, arrays herself in man's clothes, and sallies

forth in all weathers to study the secrets of nature. I believe she knows every bug, bird, and beast in the woods. I believe she recognizes every sound in a forest, and can tell you what caused it. She is primarily a naturalist, one of the foremost in America, and has published a number of books on flora and fauna, illustrated with photographs of her own taking. These books—which are closest to her heart—have only a moderate sale. Thus she hit upon the plan of writing sentimental novels, in which her observation of nature is brought to the attention of America. I have no doubt that she has led millions of boys and girls into the study of natural objects; that she has accomplished in this way much permanent good.

She is as full of energy as Roosevelt, and as hearty an American. She could have retired on a fortune long ago, but she will never retire until the day of her death, which I hope may be long distant. She is eaten up with ambition, and with the joy of life; few have more fun in their daily existence than she. I have no doubt that if the public could see some of the letters which she receives by the cartload, they would share her belief that she has not lived in vain.

I have read three of her novels—"A Girl

of the Limberlost", "A Daughter of the Land", and the one just published, "Her Father's Daughter". The first of these with all its nature lore, was rather too sentimental for me, and the third impossible; but I defy any unprejudiced person to read "A Daughter of the Land" to the end, without enthusiasm for the story. The style is so crude that one must determine not to be stopped by it; one must not quit. Apart from the lack of stylistic art, one will find an admirable story, with a real plot and real characters; nothing is shirked or softened in the course of the novel, and the heroine is a girl that holds one's attention, not merely by what happens to her, but by what she is. There is a certain grandeur in the conception of the tale, like a great architectural idea disguised by bad drawing. Furthermore, just now, when everybody thinks everybody else ought to be a farmer, this epic of the farm has a particular importance. Here was a girl who really loved the country; loved living on a farm; loved all kinds of agricultural work; loved to make and see things grow. And, as presented in the novel, this love is understandable and intelligible. There are not many such girls. But it would be well if there were more.

Living all her life in daily contact with

nature, there is an elemental force in Gene Stratton-Porter which partly accounts for the hitting power of her novels. But in her latest story, "Her Father's Daughter", her passion for the California mountains and deserts has made her neglect not only the graces of style but the reality of her supposedly human beings. Linda, the high school wonder, is an impossible person; and the contrast between her, as a child of nature, and her supposititious sister, Eileen, stands out too grossly. By far the best things in this book are the cooking receipts and the intimate facts about the desert. Here the reader feels like a child in the author's hands.

In addition to the literary shortcomings of this novel, it is sadly marred by anti-Japanese propaganda. Somebody in California has been stuffing our novelist, who is more gullible in international politics than in the study of nature. The villain of the story is a Japanese, who, enraged at losing his place at the head of his class in the high school, attempts to murder the boy who outpaced him, and is himself done to death by Katherine O'Donovan, the Strong Cook, otherwise the best character in the novel.

Despite my disappointment in "Her Father's Daughter", I shall read Gene Strat-

ton-Porter's next novel. If she is not a literary artist, she is anyhow a wonderful woman. No one lives closer to nature than she; and her undoubted vigor comes partly from this contact.

But if one wishes to see the difference between girls that are made to fit a purpose, and a real girl—the difference between puppets and humanity—let one, after reading “Helen of the Old House”, and “Her Father's Daughter”, study with attention Booth Tarkington's “Alice Adams”.

Kenneth Macgowan

Of all of our American dramatic critics, Kenneth Macgowan is probably the best known in England. This is partly because in his books he has chosen to discuss the drama as a whole, its development and its experiments, rather than to confine his efforts entirely to current reviewing. Also, he has allied himself with such experimenters as Robert Edmond Jones, the scene designer, and Eugene O'Neill. Macgowan is of Scotch-New England descent. He was born in Winthrop, Massachusetts, and was graduated from Harvard. He gravitated to New York City journalism via the Boston "Transcript" and the Philadelphia "Public Ledger". Macgowan is slight, forceful, capable of great enthusiasm and of violent prejudice. He has always been an apostle of the new, of the slightly bizarre. His "Continental Stagecraft" is a book which challenges the American producer. His "The Theatre of Tomorrow" was a sort of glorified modern footnote to Craig and Moderwell. A young man much interested

in trends and ideas, his influence has already been marked in the development of the American theatre.

RELIGION AND THE THEATER

FOR twenty years now there has been a great fuss going on about something called the new movement in the theatre. Craig, Appia, Reinhardt; Bakst, Urban, Jones; simplicity, suggestion, synthesis; *Drehbühne*, *pointillage*, *régisseur*; art theatre, little theatre, circus theatre—in spite of the confusion of such catchwords, it is hard to escape the belief that this ferment in the theatre means something. Something for life and from life; something for art and from art. Something immensely important to the sense of godhead in man which is life and art together, life and art fecundating one another.

It seems peculiarly clear that the new forces in the theatre have been working toward a spiritual change far more novel, far more interesting, and naturally far more important than any of the technical changes which they have brought about.

The technical changes have been confusing. First this business of scenic designers and revolving stages and all manner of

show and mechanism; and now the "naked stage", the permanent setting, abdication of the artist, scrapping of the machines, the actor alone on a podium or in a circus ring. All in the name of drama.

There is only one explanation. These changes have come as part of an attempt to restore the theatre to its old function. They are two very extraordinary functions. One may be debauched into titillation, or may rise to that fulness of vitality, that excitation, upon which the second function of the theater is based—the function of exaltation.

Between the old theatre, in which these functions worked as potently as they worked seldom, and the theatre in which they may work again, lay the theatre of realism. It was the product of a tremendous force, a force for evil as well as good—twentieth century science. Science made the theatre realistic and realism made the drama scientific. It ceased to be a show. It became a photograph. The drama was made "truer", but only in the sense that a photograph may be truer to fact than a drawing by Picasso. It achieved resemblance to life. And then it ceased to have excitement or exaltation, because excitement, in the vivid sense in which I use it here, is a most uncommon thing in modern life, and because exaltation

is rare and hidden, showing seldom in outward relations. Both are too exceptional for realism.

The restoration of excitement to the theatre may appear to degrade it from the exact and austere report of life which realism demanded. But the thrill of movement and event is the element in the theatre which lifts our spirits to the point where exaltation is possible. The power of the theatre lies in just this ability to raise us to ecstasy through the love of vitality which is the commonest sign of divinity in life. And when the theatre gives us ecstasy, what becomes of science? And who cares?

The new forces in the theatre have struggled more or less blindly toward this end. They have tried beauty, richness, novelty to win back excitement. They have only just begun to see that the liveliest excitation in the playhouse may come from the art of the actor and the art of the *régisseur* when they are stripped to the task of providing exaltation. Present the actor as an actor and the background as an honest material background, and you are ready for what glories the playwright and the peculiar genius of the theatre can provide. The drama is free again for its eternal task—the showing of the soul of life.

Just how much this may mean is perhaps the test of your belief in the theatre. It is the conviction of some of us that there has resided in the theatre—and our hope that there may reside once more—something akin to the religious spirit. A definition of this spirit is difficult. It is certainly not religion. It goes behind religion. It is the exaltation of which formal creeds are a product. It is the vitality which informs life, and begets art. Out of the intensity of spiritual feeling which rises from the eternal processes of the universe, and in turn becomes conscious of them, the thing is born which made Greek tragedy noble, and which called drama back to life in the Middle Ages. Then it was the spirit of religion. To-day we might call it the spirit of life.

Both consciously and unconsciously men of the theatre have sought to win back this exaltation. The latest attempt is in some ways the most daring and the most interesting. Max Reinhardt, leaving the playhouse altogether, has tried to find it in a wedding of the drama and the church. Before this is in print Reinhardt will have produced Calderon's mystic drama, "The Theatre of the World", under the high altar of the Collegien Kirche in Salzburg. It is impossible now to speak of how far he has been able

to effect an æsthetic union between the handsome rococo edifice and the platform for his players; it is only possible to speculate on the spiritual feeling which spectators may gain through looking up at the actors from a flat floor instead of looking down upon them. I cannot speak of the actual presence of exaltation in the audience, but we can speculate together on the possibilities of winning back spiritual vitality for the drama by union with the church.

First of all, there comes the disquieting thought that the theatre presents the spectacle these days of a bird that lays eggs in other birds' nests. It isn't content with the one it has used for some centuries. It must go snooping about looking for a new haven for the drama. It tries the circus. It tries the ballroom. It shows us the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin, and the Redoutensaal in the palace of Marie Theresa in Vienna. It even seems to have got a notion of laying its eggs on the fourth wall. As this wall was the only thing not thoroughly real in the realistic theatre, the result—the motion picture—is a bit of a scramble. And now the cuckoo theatre has its eye on the church.

A truer charge might be that the human animal has a perverse liking for novelty, but

even that could be countered with the assertion that out of the stimulation of novelty, as out of almost any stimulation, man can make art—if he has it in him. As to that strange bird, the theatre, it has never had good homekeeping habits. It laid its eggs on Greek altars, and in mangers of Christian chapels. It nested in inn yards in England, and in tennis courts in France. The fact that the theatre has a habit of roaming is worth about as much in this discussion of its chance in the modern church, as the fact that it once found ecstasy by the Greek altar and never produced anything approaching dramatic literature while it was in the Christian church.

In the relation of the church and the theatre there seems to be a problem for Europe and a problem for America. The possibility of the two uniting appears much greater in Europe. Europe—particularly central and southern Europe, where Catholicism flourishes—holds far more of genuine religious spirit than does America. Moreover, the church there has the strength of tradition and of art behind it. The æsthetic-emotional grip of the churches themselves, their architecture, their atmosphere, the sense of continuity that lives in them, grips men and women whose minds reject or ignore the au-

thority of dogma. Even an American, cut off from the traditional side of this life, would feel a thrill in a drama in the Collegien Kirche in Salzburg or in the Cathedral of Chartres that no performance in a theatre could give him. The beauty of the ages would bless the drama in almost any European building except a theatre. But come to America and try to imagine "Everyman" in Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street, or "The Theatre of the World" in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, not to bring it down to the level of a Methodist meeting house. The theatre can always make religion more dramatic; witness the experiments of the Reverend William Norman Guthrie and Claude Bragdon with lighting and dance in St. Marks in the Bowerie. But I do not think that any American church short of some Spanish Indian mission in the southwest can make the drama more religious.

For America—and, I suspect, for Europe, too—the problem is to find a way to the spirit independent of the church. It is not a question of producing plays in cathedrals but of producing the spirit of life in plays. It is not: Can religion make itself theatrical? but: Can the theatre make itself—in a new sense—religious?

If modern life, particularly the life of America, were spiritual in any degree, all this would be simple. Church and theatre would both minister—as neither of them does now—to the life of the spirit. America has no art and no religion which can make drama religious. America doesn't believe, in any deep sense. Science has shattered dogma, and formal religion has not been able to absorb an artistic or a philosophic spirit great enough to recreate the religious spirit in men.

The thing is still more difficult because there is nowhere in this country—unless, again, it is in the southwest—a sense of the age-long processes of life which are part of the soil and which leave their mark in men and women through the physical things that have always cradled them. In Europe even the cities hold this ancient and natural thing; they are shaped by man and time even as the fields and the hills are shaped by time and man. These cities bask and lie easy. There is a sense of long, slow growth in the very stones. In America, it is not only that our cities are new and brash. Our countryside is the same. Even our farmhouses stick out of the land like square boxes. As simple a house in Europe has a width that reconciles it with the sweep of the fields. The Ameri-

can farmhouse is a symbol of our separation from the soil. We are out of touch with the earthy vitality of life which might bring us at least a little sense of the eternal.

If the man of the theatre gives up the American church as a path to the spirit of life, and if he finds no religion in modernity from which to bring religion to the stage, what can he do? Is it possible that he can create spiritual affirmation in the people by creating it in the theatre? Can he see the vision himself, and if he sees it and embodies it, can it make over the people?

Clive Bell, writing in "Art", has described how such artists as William Blake and a very few others have reached the spiritual reality of existence—the thing we should call religion—directly, by pure intuition: "Some artists seem to have come at it by sheer force of imagination, unaided by anything without them; they have needed no material ladder to help them out of matter. They have spoken with reality as mind to mind."

Vision of this sort is so inordinately rare that it seems as though some other way must be found to open spiritual truth to the artist of the theatre. The only other way is through the deepest understanding of life itself. What can the artist find in American

life to bring the vision? Nothing, surely, on the surface. Our architects have reached a more noteworthy expression than perhaps any of our painters, because they have somehow managed to identify themselves with a spirit of affirmation behind those industrial forms that our commercial imperialism presents to view in our men of position like Morgan and Ford, our periodicals like "The American Magazine" and "The Saturday Evening Post", our subways, our cigarette ads, our patent medicines, and our Kuppenheimer clothes.

The artist of the theatre who is to create ecstasy by finding it, must see deeper than the architects behind the sham of American life. He must grasp the Spirit of America in a meaning so extraordinary that the use we ordinarily make of that phrase will seem impossibly and blasphemously cheap. We have hints of what the artist must see and understand in Sandburg's sense of Chicago, in Vachel Lindsay's sense of the middle west, in Waldo Frank's sense of New Mexico.

When theatrical genius has grasped the truth of America, it must be his business to make of himself and his theatre a magnifying glass for the rest of his fellows. What he has been able to seize by sheer intuition, he must put in such form that it can seize all

America. It is the hope of the theatre that it can make the vision of one man become the vision of many.

There is no reason why a man of the theatre should not have the vision; it has come to other artists. They have been able to transfer some share of it to the sensitive, the developed, the intellectual. The artist of the theatre can perhaps transfer it to millions, to the uneducated and the dull as well as to the receptive. In the theatre he has a very extraordinary instrument. It is the art nearest to life; its material is almost life itself. This physical identity which it has with our very existence is the thing that can enable the artist to visualize with amazing intensity a religious spirit of which he has sensed only the faintest indications in life. He can create a world which shines with exaltation and which seems—as it indeed is—a world of reality. He can give the religious spirit the pervading presence in the theatre which it once had in the life of the Greeks and of the people of the Middle Ages. And when men and women see eternal spirit in such a form, who can say that they will not take it to them?

Robert Cortes Holliday

Not long ago Robert Cortes Holliday admitted to me that his favorite writer was Laurence Sterne. This is important. There is much about them that is similar. There is the same whimsical, care-free, genial attitude toward events. I'm sure that if Laurence Sterne carried a walking stick he balanced it as nicely and at the same angle as does Bob. Holliday loves people, and he loves talk. So did Sterne. Holliday tempers his sentimentality by shafts of wit and real tenderness. So did Sterne. They are both good fellows, anyway, though two centuries apart. Holliday is of the Indianapolis group of writers. His great fondness for Booth Tarkington is a result of this, as well as the deep drawl of his voice. He is large, slow-moving, solemn of visage, with eyes that twinkle constantly behind very thick spectacles. His first advance toward life was as an artist. He was then bookseller, librarian, publisher's reader and editor. As editor of *THE BOOKMAN*, and as "Contributing Editor" he has won a wide following for

his rambling essays written under the pseudonym of "Murray Hill". His love of books, his wide reading, his curiosity and explorative sense, make him either, through his books or his person, a peculiarly warm hearted, friendly human being.

MURRAY HILL'S RECOLLECTIONS OF
JAMES HUNEKER

THERE is a rather frisky looking apartment house there now, a pastry shop and tea room occupying the ground floor—behind it, the other side of a venerable brick wall, a tiny, ancient burying ground. But in days of yesteryear here stood a tavern of renown, the Old Grape Vine, which on this site, Sixth Avenue at Eleventh Street, had given cheer since Sixth Avenue was little more than a country road. A sagging, soiled-white, two-story frame structure, with great iron grill lamps before the door. Within, the main room was somewhat reminiscent of London's Olde Cheshire Cheese.

The proprietor was a canny Scot, one MacClellan. ("Old Mac"! Whither has he gone?) I was coming along by there the other day, and I asked a man with whom I chanced to walk if he remembered the Old Grape Vine. "Ah! yes," he said; "they had

mutton pies there." They did. And excellent ale, also, served in battered pewter mugs. "They" had here, too (some fifteen years ago), excellent society beneath the dingy light. Roaring, roistering George Luks (as he was then) very much to the fore. At the rickety mahogany table where Frans-Halsian George held forth frequently was to be found the painter William J. Glackens, and his brother "Lew", humorous draughtsman for "Puck". Ernest Lawson sometimes came in. A Mr. Zinzig, a very pleasant soul and an excellent pianist and teacher of the piano, often was of the company. A Mr. Fitzgerald, art critic in those days of the "Sun", occasionally "sat in". And a delightful old cock, Mr. Stephenson, art critic then of the "Evening Post". There was a man of the sea who continuously told stories of Japan. (After eleven he was somewhat given to singing.) There was an illustrator for a twopenny magazine, who (so as to seem to be a large staff) signed a variety of names to his work. From the land of R. L. S., he. One time while in a doze (somewhere else) he was robbed. His comment upon his misfortune became a classic line. It was: "By heaven! As long as whisky is sold to lose ten dollars is enough to drive a Scot mad!" (This was long before

anybody had even heard of the illustrious Mr. Volstead.) And many more there were. Oh me! ah me! How the picture has changed!

Well, the point of all this (if it have any point) is that it was in the Old Grape Vine (of tender memory) that I first saw James Gibbons Huneker. I think that, in his promenades as an impressionist, he was there but seldom. Though we know that high among the Seven Arts he rated the fine art of drinking Pilsner. The old places of Martin's and Lüchow's (headquarters on a time for the musical cognoscenti) were ports of call on his rounds, and he moved freely, I believe, among the places of refreshment along the foreign quarter of lower Fourth Avenue. At the Grape Vine, I understand, he was an especial friend of Luks, and probably of Glackens and Lawson. And, though he was a very famous man, he seemed to like the motley company.

Ten or twelve years ago I was earning a living more honestly than perhaps I have been making one since. I was a clerk in a book store—the retail department, it happened, of the house which publishes Mr. Huneker's books. And there, from my position "on the floor", I frequently saw him moving in and out. Moving rather

slowly, with the dignity of bulk. A distinguished figure, quietly but quite neatly dressed, very erect in carriage, head held well back, supporting his portliness with that physical pride of portly men, a physiognomy of Rodinesque modeling—his cane a trim touch to the ensemble. He was, I distinctly remember, held decidedly in regard by the retail staff because he was (what, by a long shot, a good many “authors” were not) exceedingly affable in manner to us clerks.

The moment I have particularly in mind was when Samuel Butler’s volume “The Way of All Flesh” first appeared in an American edition. We all know all about Butler now. But, looking back, it certainly is astonishing how innocent most all of us then were of any knowledge of the great author of “Erewhon”. Even so searching a student of literature as W. C. Brownell was practically unacquainted with Butler. He was taking home a copy of “The Way of All Flesh” to read. Mr. Huneker was standing by. In some comment on the book, he remarked that Butler had been a painter. “A painter!” exclaimed Mr. Brownell, in a manner as though wondering how it came about he knew so little of the man. “But this”, said Mr. Huneker, referring to the

novel, "is not his best stuff. That is in his note books." Brownell: "And where are they?" Hunecker: "In the British Museum." Mr. Brownell made a fluttering gesture (as though to express that he "gave up") toward Mr. Hunecker. "He knows everything!" he ejaculated.

We should, of course, be surprised now that anybody *did not* know that Butler had been a painter. When, just a short time ago, W. Somerset Maugham adapted for the purposes of his sensational novel "The Moon and Sixpence" the character and career of Paul Gauguin, it was in the pages of Hunecker that many first looked for, and found, intelligence concerning the master of the Pont Aven school of painting. Well, Gauguin is now an old story. And Ibsen, Tolstoy, Wagner, Nietzsche, Meredith, Henry James, William James, Bergson, Anatole France, Lemaitre, Faguet, Shaw, Wilde, George Moore, Yeats, Synge, Schnitzler, Rodin, Matisse, Picasso, Van Gogh, George Luks—they all are old stories, too . . . now. But it was our Steeplejack, James Hunecker, who was our pioneer watcher of the skies. And what in the large sweep of his vision of the whole field of the world's beauty he saw, he reported with infinite gusto. "Gusto", as H. L. Mencken in the

Huneker article of his "Book of Prefaces" says, "unquenchable, contagious, inflammatory."

The extent of the personal contact which Mr. Huneker enjoyed and maintained with the first-rate literary men of the world, was amazing. While I was with the bookshop I speak of, "presentation copies" of each new book of his, to be sent out "with the compliments of the author", were piled up for forwarding literally several feet high. They went to all the great in letters, in every country, that you could think of. Anatole France, Joseph Conrad, Georg Brandes, Edmund Gosse, George Moore—people like that.

Vast was the incoming stream of books to him: presentation copies, review copies, publicity copies; so great a flood that it was necessary for him periodically to call in an old book man to clear his shelves by carting away a wagonload or two of genuine treasure. A catalogue I one time saw of such volumes "from the library of James Huneker" was sufficient in riches to have been the catalogue of the entire stock of a very fair shop dealing in "association" volumes, first editions, and so forth. And a survey of the books themselves made it quite apparent that a reader who has read every word that

Huneker ever printed (and that would be a person who has read a good deal) may yet (very likely) be a reader who has not read some of the best of Huneker. I refer to "Jimmie's" humorous, pungent marginalia.

Mr. Huneker's close friends have taken occasion since his death to speak warmly of his kindness toward obscure, struggling talent. There was a side to him, akin to this, which I have not seen commented upon. Huneker's fame as a critic had been for years accepted throughout Europe. When his "New Cosmopolis" was published (a book I did not myself think so highly of) Joyce Kilmer, then newly come to journalism, reviewed it for the New York "Times", very eulogistically. Mr. Huneker went to the trouble of looking up Kilmer to thank him very simply for his praise.

Mr. Huneker was a loyal and disinterested servant of good literature wherever he found it, and his happily was the power to be an ambassador to success—as in the case of William McFee's "Casuals of the Sea". Through my connection with the matter of "Casuals" I suppose it was, that a correspondence came about between Mr. Huneker and me. And in all my days I have never seen so energetic a correspondent. It seems to me that I got a letter from him about

every other morning. I dropped out of the publishing business and went to Indiana for a time. I let him know when I got there, my motive in this being mainly to notify him that I *was* out of the publishing business and so was no longer in a position to give any business attention to letters relating to books. But letters from him continued to reach me with the same regularity. While, I hardly need say, I enjoyed this correspondence enormously, I was decidedly embarrassed by it, as I could not but keenly feel that I was taking up his time to no purpose. Still, of course, I felt that I should answer each letter of his without an impolite delay, and no sooner did he get my reply than he answered back again. Gradually, however, we got the thing slowed down.

His letters were prodigal of witty things. I am afraid I have not kept them; if I have, I do not know where they are—I move about a good deal. One neat play of words I remember. I do not know whether or not he himself ever used it elsewhere. I did use it in a book, giving due credit to Mr. Huneker. I had told him that I was going in for writing on my own. His comment was: “He that lives by the pen shall perish by the

pen." Some of his letters, I recall, were signed, "Jim, the Penman."

And it was no simple trick to read them. He used a pale ink. The handwriting was small, curious, and to me almost illegible. Why compositors did not mob him I do not know. He wrote everything by hand; never would learn to use a typewriter, and declared that he could not acquire the faculty of dictation.

This leads me to the story of one of the articles he contributed to *THE BOOKMAN*. When, upon my return to New York, I became (for a time) editor of this magazine I pursued him for contributions. Yes, later on he would send us something, but always it was later on, later on. I had about given up hope of ever getting anything from him when a bulky wad of closely-written "copy" on yellow paper arrived. Expecting that it would take me a couple of days to decipher the manuscript, I joyously acknowledged receipt of it at once, without a thought of questioning the nature of the article. When I tried to read the article, after I had held the first page sideways, next upside down, then examined it in a mirror, I "passed the buck" and sent the copy straight on to the printers. If printers had read him before printers ought to be able to again. I ad-

vertised the article to appear in the next number of the magazine. When I got the article back in galley proofs—I got a jolt. It wasn't "BOOKMAN stuff" at all—all about a couple of "old rounders", as Mr. Huneker called them, taking a stroll.

I do not think that Mr. Huneker has as yet since his death, to the time these rambling remarks are being written, received anything like adequate recognition in the press. The "obituary" articles in the newspapers have carried the air that he was hardly more than an excellent "newspaper man"—somewhat older, but something like (dare I say?) Heywood Broun or Alexander Woollcott. Ah! no; James Huneker was a critic and an artist, and a figure, too, in our national life. Though he was all his days until almost his last breath a hard-working journalist with an immediate "copy date" before him. And though he most naturally thought of himself, with common-sense pride in his calling, as a journalist. I remember his one time speaking of Arnold Bennett as "a hard-working journalist as well as a novel writer". Indicating his great esteem for the character of journalist. And he used to speak too, with fraternal pride and affection in inflection, of young men who had written good

books as being among "our men", meaning associated with the same paper as himself.

At the remarkable funeral service held in the new Town Hall in New York high and touching honor was done his memory by the stage and the musical profession, but literature seemed to be officially represented by the person of Richard LeGallienne alone, and painting and sculpture not at all. The articles by Mr. Huneker's colleagues among music critics have seemed very largely to claim him as quite their own. True, no doubt, his most penetrating writing was done in the field of musical criticism. But, also, Huneker was an evangel who belongs to the Seven Arts.

One thing should be added. It is a sad thing, but it is of the nature of life. A good editorial in the current number of "The New Republic" begins: "James Huneker named one of his best books 'The Pathos of Distance'. In a single day his own figure is invested with the memorial gentleness there described." No, not altogether in a single day. He had already begun, and more than begun, to recede into the pathos of distance. His flair was for the championship and interpretation of the "new" men. And, for the most part, his new men had become old men.

His stoutest admirer must admit that Mr. Huneker's work was "dated".

But where (and this is sadder still) is his like to-day?

MURRAY HILL

Alexander Woollcott

Mr. Woollcott's person is engaging enough to have jumped bodily from the pages of Charles Dickens, an author whom, by the way, he greatly admires. The first time I ever saw him was in Heywood Broun's Paris studio, on New Year's Eve, 1917-18. He was, there, a private in the United States Medical Corps, and his O. D.'s, I must say, made him seem more Bairnsfather than Dickens. He was lounged on a large low divan, peering solemnly at the company, a somewhat motley throng. Mr. Woollcott is short, rotund, jovial, given to elaborate and biting statements, punctuated by gestures which are often as grotesque as they are incisive. He was born in Phalanx, New Jersey, and was graduated from Hamilton College. Are not these facts, in themselves, Dickensonian? Woollcott, to me, is the most interesting of our dramatic critics; for he not only seems to have a knowledge of the theatre but he occasionally permits himself rare and unreasoning enthusiasms off the track of popular approval. His reputation

was established as critic of the New York "Times". He is now critic and colyumist of the "Herald". It was his enthusiasm for Dickens which gave birth to a delightful volume, "Mr. Dickens Goes to the Play". His enthusiasm for the army occasioned "The Command is Forward". His enthusiasm for Mrs. Fiske prompted, "Mrs. Fiske . . . Her Views on Acting, Actors and the Problems of the Stage". More recently his essays have been collected in "Shouts and Murmurs". The story he tells here is, he says, no essay at all. Maybe so. At any rate, it's an interesting piece of literary history even if it does not do Mr. Woollcott justice in displaying him as the essayist of whimsicality and penetrating irony, which he is.

O. HENRY, PLAYWRIGHT

WHEN, if ever, they call for a new editor of that amiable biography of O. Henry by C. Alphonso Smith, there should be added a chapter about his adventures as a playwright. To be sure, in the final stretch of this official history of Sydney Porter, the recording professor does say parenthetically: "Plans for a novel and a play were also much in his mind at this

time, but no progress was made in actual construction." Nothing, however, is vouchsafed as to what that play was, how it got into the aforesaid mind in the first place, and why it never came out. It never did come out, for as a playwright O. Henry was a little brother to that forlorn fellow who figures in Augustus Thomas's reminiscences and whose successive lodgings in New York were always traceable by stray bits of manuscript which had never progressed beyond the brave beginning: "Act One, Scene One: A Ruined Garden." To that family of dramatists O. Henry belonged. It was a large family. It still is.

This is really George Tyler's story. He is one of those managers who are ever and always exploring for playwrights and players where no one else has looked. His ardor has always been addressed to the task of growing a dramatist where only a novelist grew before. He and Kipling, for instance, have spent unchronicled hours in conference over a Mulvaney play. But that is another story. Tyler would, I think, derive more heart-warming satisfaction out of extracting four acts from some reluctant teller of tales, than out of any contract he could sign with the most tested and chronically successful dramatist of the day. And just as the late

Charles Frohman, by an incorrigible and disarming doggedness, finally badgered the bewildered Barrie into writing for the theatre, so Tyler hoped to make a playwright of O. Henry. He never encountered him on a street corner or dropped him a note about one of his stories without nagging him to try his hand at a play.

Every O. Henry story naturally prompted such a hope. Every one of them fairly tingled with the stuff of which plays are made; and much of that stuff, rented or borrowed or blandly stolen, has since found its way into theatres all over the world. But it was so much easier to write a story, and for a while the Tyler blandishments had no visible effect. The drowsy dramatist that is probably in all of us and that was certainly in O. Henry, stirred uneasily in response to the Tyler proddings, but never really awakened.

O. Henry's connection with the theatre had been slight and discouraging. He had, in a needy moment, written the libretto of a musical comedy called "Lo", for which Franklin P. Adams ingenuously fashioned the lyrics and A. Baldwin Sloane the music—a promising but impractical triumvirate whose first and only effort started boldly out from Chicago, wandered erratically

around the middle west for fourteen weeks, and then died somewhere, alone, neglected, and unsung. New York never saw it and neither, for that matter, did O. Henry.

Then, in a sudden fit of industry, he drew up a scenario for a comedy, perhaps with the solemn intention of writing it, but more probably in the hope that it would impress the importunate Tyler and lead to a small advance of cash. Indeed, there is still in existence the back of an envelope which served as a ledger wherein were noted the sums, amounting in all to more than \$1,200, that were doled out to O. Henry to keep his spirits up and in the faint hope that he might actually get around some day to writing that comedy.

The stories O. Henry wrote, their abundance and their spasmodic unevenness, can never be understood by one who does not keep in mind the fact that he was chronically penniless and forever dashing off pieces either to quiet some editor who had lent him money or to extract himself from pawn at some hotel. This continuous pauperism is usually explained in one of two ways, either that he tossed largess right and left like some latter day Robin Hood or that his pockets were continuously drained by blackmailers whose silence was necessary to his

peace. But really no explanation is urgent, for O. Henry earned comparatively little money even in his most successful years and the great sums which his works eventually brought did not begin to stream in until after his death.

It was from such a fellow that Tyler received at last the somewhat cloudy scenario of a comedy to be based on "The World and the Door", a story which appears now as the first one in the posthumous collection called "Whirligigs". The story has as its setting one of those little lazy colonies of expatriates in South America—the wistful colonies of which every member has a good legal reason for not returning to the United States. O. Henry had seen them at close range in the unhappy years when he and the Jennings brothers were themselves fugitives from justice. "The World and the Door" spins a romance between a New Yorker who had shot down a fellow roisterer in a drunken brawl and a lovely woman who had given aconite to her husband and left hurriedly for foreign parts. The tale reaches its acute crisis when the two fugitives discover that neither victim has died and that both of them are free to abandon romance and return to civilization. From that story

the scenario was made and set aside to simmer.

Then one Sunday morning, at a time when H. B. Warner, a Tyler star, was involved in a moribund entertainment that was sinking rapidly out in Chicago, in walked Tyler's father all aglow over a new volume of O. Henry stories. It contained the yarn which every one knows as "A Retrieved Reformation". I find that when, from time to time, polls are solemnly opened to decide which was the best of all he wrote, the vote goes either to that fragment, so Dickensy in its flavor, "An Unfinished Story", or to that rarer and more delicate work, "A Municipal Report". (My own choice would always be for "The Skylight Room".) But I suppose there is no doubt that "A Retrieved Reformation" is the most widely known of all the tales O. Henry told. It is the story of Jimmy Valentine, ex-convict and retired safe cracker, who, having reformed and settled down as a bank cashier, has so artfully builded his alias that the pursuing detective cannot prove the identity. Just in the moment when he is turning away, baffled, panic word is rushed in that a child has been locked by accident in the bank's new vault, a child sure to die of suffocation unless, by some miracle, there can be found in time one

of the half dozen men in the world so expert in safe cracking that, with eyes blindfolded and fingers sensitized, they can decipher any combination. Of course the heroic Valentine must volunteer his buried talent and, by his success at it, confess the suspected identity. And of course, since O. Henry was a spinner of fairy tales, the detective does not laugh cynically and arrest the lad, but bursts instead into affecting tears and goes pensively away forever.

Tyler read that story, shut the book with a snap and began telegraphing hotly in every direction. Out in Chicago was Warner needing a new play as a drooping flower needs water. Then one wire went to O. Henry, offering \$500 for the dramatic rights. The offer was accepted with pathetic promptitude, first by wire and then by the following letter:

Asheville, N. C., *October 23, 1909.*

Mr. George C. Tyler

Liebler & Co.

N. Y. City.

MY DEAR MR. TYLER: I hereby transfer to you the entire dramatic rights of the story you write me about—the title is “A Retrieved Reformation.” I am glad to be able to hand you over anything that you might be able to use.

But I want you to let the \$500 that I owe you still remain owing, for I am going to write that

play yet and soon. I've been in bad shape for a long time, both as to writing and refunding. I'm wrestling with a bad case of neurasthenia (so the doctor says), but I'm getting back into good shape again. I am living about six miles out of Asheville and spend most of the time climbing hills and living out-of-doors. I have knocked off 20 pounds weight. I eat like a drayman and don't know what booze tastes like. In fact, I'll be better than ever in another week or two.

I got out the scenario of "The World and the Door" some days ago and began to plan out the acts and scenes. I'll surprise you with it as soon as I get down to hard work.

I deeply appreciate your leniency and kindness and intend to "come up to scratch" yet with the goods.

So, the dramatic rights of the "Retrieved Reformation" are yours and if you strike another story you like take it too.

In the meantime, I owe you \$500, am going to pay it and remain

Sincerely yours

SYDNEY PORTER.

P. S. If you want a more formal assignment of the rights of the story, send on the papers and I will sign 'em.

Tyler then sent for Paul Armstrong, a wise old artisan of the theatre, who could be counted on to turn the story into a play without spilling anything, and who could also be expected to do it quickly, as he too was probably without funds. Armstrong read the story, agreed to try his hand at it,

and vanished. It turned out later that he had been locked up in a room at the Hotel Algonquin, but for a week there was no signal from him and it was upon an impresario fuming with impatience and uneasiness that he sauntered nonchalantly in at the end of that week. Tyler launched at once on a burning speech in which he gave his opinion of Broadway as a habitat for men who thought they were playwrights, his opinion of the faithless and the irresponsible denizens of that territory, and his opinion of his own bitter and thankless job, which he said, he was minded to forsake then and there in favor of farming. Which oration Armstrong interrupted by producing from his ulster the completed four act manuscript of a melodrama, the first of the crook plays, "Alias Jimmy Valentine". The next day they were all on their way to Chicago and eleven days later the piece was produced there. Within three weeks, therefore, after Tyler first read "A Retrieved Reformation", its dramatization began a run which was to make reputations for some people and fortunes for others; which was to tweak and tantalize playgoers all over America, England, France, Spain and South Africa; and which was to breed a very epidemic of plays in which no self-respecting protagonist would

think of approaching the first act without a neat murder or at least a bank robbery to his credit.

I often think how much it adds to a playgoer's interest in a piece to know something of the manner in which it came to be written, something of the source of its incident and its viewpoint, something, that is, of its own biography. Consider those first nighters in Chicago who encountered Jimmy Valentine in the Sing Sing scene, met with him the sorry procession of prison types and finally followed him in his precarious flight into respectability. How they would have gaped had they known (and probably not more than one or two of them even guessed) that this, in a sense, was O. Henry's own story, that he too had been a convicted felon, that he had come to know the original of Jimmy Valentine when they were both in prison together in Ohio, and that at that very time he, like Jimmy, was building with his own hands a new identity in a new world.

If this missing chapter ever does find its way into the O. Henry biography, there ought, I suppose, to be a footnote about the actress picked up out of space to play the leading feminine rôle. For "Alias Jimmy Valentine", that company of Warner's out in Chicago would do well enough. But the

cast of the play required a new leading woman. Someone mentioned casually that there was a promising newcomer to be seen that very afternoon in a special *matinée* somewhere on Broadway. Tyler dropped in, took one look, and engaged her forthwith—a lovely, droll, wide eyed young actress who had just come in out of the provinces and who was already footsore from her weary rounds of the managers' offices in an effort to persuade someone that she knew how to act. Her name was Laurette Taylor.

But that is a footnote. And "Alias Jimmy Valentine" itself is important in the story of O. Henry as a playwright only because it yielded Paul Armstrong something like \$100,000 while it yielded O. Henry, whose idea it had been, nothing like that at all. He made just \$500 out of it. This painful discrepancy was something which the guileful Tyler meant that O. Henry should not be allowed to forget. Every week, when the official copy of the box office statement went through the mails to Armstrong as a matter of routine, a duplicate copy was mailed to O. Henry. It was, of course, a lean time in which Armstrong did not receive each week more for writing the play than O. Henry received all told for having invented it. After a little succession of such

weekly reminders, the wear and tear upon O. Henry's spirits became visible.

Witness this letter which arrived in New York early in 1910:

Asheville, N. C.

Monday

MY DEAR MR. TYLER,

I had expected to be in N. Y. before this but I am not. I have been putting in all my time getting in good shape for future campaigns, and doing practically no work at all. Have entirely recovered my health and feel fine and fit. I have done barely enough writing to keep the possum from the door since I've been down here, but I think I have gained greatly thereby.

Got a little proposition to make to you.

If you'll advance me \$500, I'll come at once to N. Y., establish myself in some quiet rural spot of the metropolis known only to yourself and your emissaries and get to work and finish a play. I will not let my whereabouts or even the fact that I am in the city be known to anyone but you; and I will give all my time and energy to the play.

As collateral, I can only make over to you the dramatic rights of all my stories until the work is done. The new play "Alias J. V." has inspired me to believe I can do something for both of us.

If you will do this, let me know immediately and I will come.

Of course if you don't care to do it, it won't affect our future relations. But I want to get in the game, and I'll stick to you *exclusively* until we try it out.

Yours as ever

SYDNEY PORTER.

c/o Jas. S. Coleman.

The answer to this seems to have been cautious and conditional, for further explanations soon started north as follows:

Asheville, N. C., 1/25 '10.

MY DEAR MR. TYLER:

I will be brief. Why I want the money in a lump sum is to make a getaway quick. Your proposition is better than mine, but it lacks the hastiness and expedition necessary to a big theatrical success. As I told you I have been busy down here for about four months getting rid of cirrhosis of the liver, fatty degeneration of the heart and neurasthenia—none of which troubles I have ever had. But I was about as nervous and reflex-actiony as the hind-leg of a frog as shown in the magazine-section of almost any Sunday newspaper. The country and the mountains have been worth more to me than money—I am almost as strong and tough as a suffragette.

But I have (by order of the Old Doctor) avoided work gladly and cheerfully. Consequently I have as much money on hand as was left lying around the box office at the last performance of "Lo."

Now, suppose we have a few moments conversation as heart-to-heart as an editorial on chicken-salad in the Ladies' Home Journal by Edward Everett Hale.

I owe something in the neighborhood of \$500 down here that should and shall be paid before the obsequious porter of the So. Ry. Co. can have the opportunity of brushing the soot off the window sill of Mr. Pullman's car onto the left knee of my new trousers. I'm not after money now—it's transportation, transposition and a chance that I

want. I can work the proposition out in the short story line; but it's slow, Colonel, slow. I want to get into the real game, and I'll stake my reputation as the best short story writer within a radius of Asheville that we can pull it off.

Here's what I need in order to start things going.

I've got to pay up everything here and leave a small bunch of collateral with my long-suffering family to enable them to purchase the usual cuisine of persimmons and rabbits for a while.

I will do this.

If you will send me the necessary sinews, I will start for N. Y. on Wednesday or Thursday of next week. I will, on arrival, secure a room or two with privilege of bath 3 flights above, and 'phone you the next morning. Thenceforth I am yours and Mr. Ford's until results have been accomplished. I will place all my time at your disposal until the play is finished. My proposition is not unselfish—I expect to make it profitable to myself as well as to you.

Proviso—

Don't give it away to any magazine, or anybody else, that I am there. I will be in retirement and working for you as long as may be necessary. My mail will be sent here as it has been, and forwarded there. My family will remain here during the Summer. They seem to like the idea of my returning to N. Y., although I have been reasonably kind to them.

Now, listen.

You know how much "front" counts. I'm not afraid of N. Y. police or editors: but if I arrive there in a linen suit, pith helmet and tennis shoes what would Big Bill Edwards do to me but shovel me into a cart and dump me into East River?

So get busy with your telegraph blanks. Send me \$750 *by wire* when you get this and I'll strike N. Y. Thursday at the latest. I've got to have some margin, and you'll get my exclusive services thereby. Take another chance. You can't lose.

I am enclosing as a rather poor collateral the rights to my stories.

I hate to make any new dickers with the magazine people and that's why I put the matter so strenuously up to you. I know now how much better (financially) the stage business is:—thanks to you.

Tell Oom Paul Armstrong that I hope he'll crack the safe for all it's worth in "Alias Jimmy". I got the press notices that you had sent me.

I'm awfully sorry to have to come back to town and write a better play than Mr. Armstrong has—but I need the money—he won't mind.

With best regards

SYDNEY PORTER

c/o Jas. S. Coleman.

P. S. To summarize—\$750—by—wire—not by an A. D. T.—satisfaction guaranted or money refunded.

This appears to have been followed breathlessly by a telegram which read thus:

LIKE TO HAVE FUNDS DO WIRE TODAY WILL
POSITIVELY BE THERE ON TIME HAVE CUT OUT
SPENDING AND CHIANLI

S. P.

Tyler seems to have thought it wisest to send only a part of the sum demanded and

to do that by mail. By the end of February this glowing message came up from Asheville:

WILL ARRIVE AT NOON MONDAY IF YOUR HUN-
DRED WIRED TODAY EXCLUSIVE WORK GUARANTEED
UNTIL SATISFACTORY RESULTS

SYDNEY PORTER

And this was followed by one even more urgent:

WIRE BALANCE AM WAITING AT THE DEPOT
PORTER

So Tyler wired the balance, but the promised phone message from the modest and secluded lodgings never came. The first tidings came from a hospital, to which O. Henry had been taken mortally ill with pneumonia. He had received the money, retained the margin, and started north. But once he had found himself at the gates of Bagdad, he had stood wide eyed for a moment and then drifted happily off among the bazaars, stumbling on some old cronies, and given himself over to celebration of his return from exile. Tyler never saw him again. And the great American play—"The World and the Door", a comedy in three acts by the author of "The Four Million"—was never written.

Mary Austin

In "*The Bookman Anthology of Verse*" I wrote of Mrs. Austin as follows:

"Few people in America understand native rhythms as does Mary Austin. Born in Illinois, she has divided her life between the Far West and the East, making it her special effort to understand the country as a whole. She has written plays, essays, novels and studies of American life. Her work among the Indians has given her not only an unusual mastery of subtle cadences in prose and poetry; but a certain mystic sense of the trend of national feeling that approaches the visionary. A commanding presence, an intuitive understanding and a discriminating tolerance make Mrs. Austin a truly vital force in American life and literature."

This, I think, did not do justice to her extraordinary vitality, her knowledge of the Indians and the desert, her command of folklore and of language. Her platform manner, her control of an audience, makes her one of the best lecturers I know. An unusual person, Mary Austin. She likes to be called

Chisera, or "The Witch Woman". She seems almost that.

WOMEN AS AUDIENCE

AMONG the most resented attitudes to which women have been reduced by our androcentric culture, is that of passive spectator to the male performance. The whole feminist movement, in fact, is energized by our resistance to that rôle, and our determination to participate in constructive movement by contact. It is disconcerting then, to discover, after the removal of the political bar, that in everything but the personal accomplishment we are still in a state of practical nullity toward our national culture, owing to our never having learned, as women, the business of being audience. All that we have learned, it now appears, is the art of sitting still in more or less becoming attitudes.

It is humiliating admission for so confirmed a feminist as myself to make, but a survey of what is actually transacting among the organized and federated groups of women from whom creative social reaction might have been expected, shows them, in respect to literature, art, and education, very much in the state of those conscientious

attendants at concerts who have to wait until the conductor turns around to know when to applaud the orchestra. Any public performer who is clever enough to make the applausive gesture at suitable intervals can be sure of a sufficient feminine claque to keep him circulating in the Big Time of platform attention without any particular deserts.

Consider in this connection, the fate of recent European candidates for the American claque as they have enfiladed across our lecture field. Whenever they have been of sufficient prominence to attract mixed audiences of men and women, those who had nothing to say found themselves swiftly and emphatically curtailed in their opportunities of saying it. Few laurels of alien growth have ever sprouted vigorously enough in the atmosphere of self-conscious democracy, to conceal the want of pertinence in the wearer of them. But when the lecturer is of the type whose access to the American pocket-book is chiefly by way of the stereotyped women's organizations, the shadow of a leaf upon his brow—less, the mere poise of that brow as if it wore the wreath—is enough to insure his thrift campaign against frost. After a few months of circulation among women's club audiences he will be in a posi-

tion to command the top price from the New York magazines for telling the American public the low opinion he has formed of its native culture.

Not that I would deny to, say, W. L. George, such confirmation of his estimate of the inferior intelligence of women as he derives from those who can be brought together to hear him express it. What I am here to affirm is that neither the ease with which American women can be intellectually imposed upon, nor their failure to function creatively as audience to our burgeoning literature and art, is to be taken as indicative of any lack of capacity critically to appreciate, or individually to produce their share of it. It has to do with the general inexperience of women in collective reaction, and is about as indicative as the movements of a waltzing horse of what could normally be expected.

Let me illustrate from the women's magazines, which are theoretically created in response to what the editors, assisted by the advertisers, really know of what women want. Actually, in addition to their function as trade journals, which they admirably fill, women's magazines represent what the men editors think it desirable for women to read, modified by the erroneous conviction

of advertisers that the spread of advanced ideas among women lessens the consumption of bottled mincemeat, colored insert breakfast food, and full-page flour. There was "The Ladies' Home Journal" which, under Mr. Bok, built up an unprecedented standard of magazine popularity. At the same time it failed to retard in the slightest degree the successful development of all the ideas it opposed,—suffrage, women's clubs, family limitation and the like,—which went on progressively among the very women on whose living room tables the "Journal" was periodically displayed.

It is this curious lack of causality between what women unprotestingly take in, and what they can be counted on to do, that inhibits the free expression of woman-mindedness in our literature and art. There is no more sequential relation between what they listen to and what they think, than there is between their morals and the things they can be induced to sit through in the moving picture houses.

The photodrama provides us with one of the most illuminating side lights on the failure of women to function representatively as audience, in their neglect of the quality of "form" in cultural expression. The criterions of women are interior. What

was meant, what was subjectively felt by the protagonists, determines for them the affectuality of the action. High ground for this interior standard being established by convention, an audience of women can not only be made to accept, but can be induced to applaud offenses against essential decency. Let it be clearly understood that the boudoir scene is an incident in a proper honeymoon, and details which every man in the audience knows were introduced with libidinous intent, will "get by" with the women. On the same general level this is true of books. In the second rank of popular magazines, one feels certain, we are saved from a great deal of potential indecency only by the circumstance of their being read largely by men.

I have lectured many times before women audiences, on the social significance of literature, and I have made a habit of setting down immediately afterward the significant questions asked with the result that, turning them over just now, I find not one indicative of the desire, or the sense of obligation on the part of the reader, to enter into the creative struggle. What they do seem to want is suggestions for obtaining creative *results* for themselves, or items by which they may participate effectively in the *talk*

about creative work. Or they will be satisfied with mere entertainment.

Much of this detachment is, I suspect, the residue of woman's century old habit of thinking of books, magazines, plays, and painting as the sort of thing Daddy brings home from his hunting, toward which she has conceived her duty to be an uncritical disposition to make the best of what is offered. Thus there is always a tendency on the part of women to measure art by the ensuing fatness of their personal reactions, rather than by the social significance of the creative act; to be appreciative of the artist as a man rather than as a representative of the tribe of mankind. It may be that the slight touch of the exotic attaching to the foreign poet and novelist, which favors this feminine attitude of superior detachment from the sweat of achieving, has something to do with their preferential hearing. For the rest we have no evidence that Xantippe thought any more highly of the "Dialogues" than Carol Kennicott thought of the symposium at the drug store.

If it were not for the circumstance that few women's clubs can be induced to pay to women artists the terms and attention that are conceded to men, the track to effective participation might be beaten out for them

by women who have already trodden it for themselves. No doubt much of the collective ineffectiveness of women in this field is due to their never having acquired free movement of themselves as impersonal, unemphasized items of society.

An incident of constant recurrence in the life of every woman who has attained a reasonable literary expression of herself, is to be importuned by other women to write about this, to protest against that, or to write more often on matters concerning which it is her consuming desire to be permitted to write. When she responds with an impatient, "For heaven's sake, if you like my stuff, don't waste time telling me, tell the editor!" the most usual retort is a startled, "But he wouldn't pay any attention to me, I'm no critic." This is something more than an excessive estimate of the part critics play in the establishment of literary reputations. It is both evidence and result of woman's inexperience in functioning as a particle of the democratic whole. Accustomed immemorably to presenting herself as an individual issue, as maiden, wife, mother, at the lowest as female, she tends still to approach the cultural poll in some specialized capacity. It is news to her that as paying member of the audience she has acquired both privilege

and obligation in respect to the quality of the performance. Some day it will come to her, together with the horrid thought that she has been excluded this long time from cultural effectiveness, not by man's wish to exclude her, but because she has never learned the game.

It must be failure of method. Nobody could accuse the women's clubs of any failure of intention to do their whole duty by the literature of their native land. Have they not every one of them a book committee, and the habit of inviting visiting celebrities to sit on the platform whole afternoons at the price of saying a few words at the end of the regular program? Has not every author in America had one or more letters stating that the writer's club has assigned that particular author to her for author's day, and she has never read any of his works; will he not kindly send her a review of his life and works to read? Do not thousands of dollars pass annually by way of their lecture committees to the pockets of authors of whom nobody can say with certainty where, in the scheme of American values, they belong?

It would be unfair to attribute the failure of one of the most remarkable organizations ever created in any society, to produce an

appreciable effect on our literature, to the four million women of the finer strain who make up its membership. Is not the whole situation a reflection of our common national disposition to regard all art as a performance, some kind of "show"? Whereas the artist himself knows it is a way of life, of which the book or the picture is the evidence rather than the object of pursuit. It is not likely that men, just as men, would do any better. But because women have rather definitely assumed the rôle of patrons of culture, because they have made a stagger at fulfilling it, they must come in for a certain amount of question. It is women who have already accepted the responsibility for social conditions in which mature men and women divide themselves, for purposes of culture, according to sex. So when we wish to talk about organized effort to produce a representative culture, we have nothing else to talk about but the women's clubs.

European observers are disposed to credit this state of things to a want of sex power in our women; that is, to a feebleness in the whole delicate complex of vital responses which women make to men. It is interesting to note that Sinclair Lewis, whether deliberately or by one of those divine accidents to which the sincere artist is liable, related

these two impotencies in the heroine of "Main Street". But such an explanation proceeds primarily from the old view that men produce and women appreciate; a state of things which our whole American experiment is organized to deny. The most we can say of American women is that they have rejected the traditional mode of response to intellectual creativeness, without having taught themselves any more efficacious measures.

What women have to learn to be audience to, is not the book after it is written, nor the personality of the author who writes it, but the process by which a really vital book gets itself produced out of our communal experience. What they must assist at is not the adumbration of praise for work that is done, so much as the selection and emphasis of social conditions that have power over a book while it is doing. In this connection an Author's League as much interested in what of the author is going into the book, as in what is coming back to him in the way of royalties, might be helpful.

It is a realization of the need of women to rehearse the rôle of audience in the collective key, that has led to the organization of the Women's News Service, by which, through the medium of their local press,

women will be enabled to practice, along lines already familiar, the rapid intake and response indispensable to their success as co-efficients of a democratic culture. But the Women's News Service aims only at establishing this rapport about what women are doing. What is needed is a realization that in the indigenous literature of America, there already exists a competent news service about life as it is living. The true approach to it from women is neither as women nor as critics, but as participators in the collective experience, of which the particular mode of poetry or fiction is the individual expression. Such an approach is neither instinctive in women, nor part of their social inheritance. It cannot, however, be assumed that men sitting together as an organized body to hear any available author read from or talk about his work, will produce any sort of result which will be found competent to support a creditable national literature, and to be of constructive value in the great age of American literature, must begin to be operative shortly. Otherwise it might be suspected that the rôle to which men assigned women, of sitting still and saying nothing except what is pleasant, is the one to which they are intrinsically best adapted.

Burton Rascoe

Burton Rascoe, I suppose, is one of the most nervous men who ever lived. He is never still. He talks in stammering rushes. He moves about the room as he talks. He is slender, sleek, with high cheek bones, prominent lips, and eyes that are intense, and arresting. As violent in his opinions as in his person, he is a critic and a colyunist who is constantly provoking his public to disagreement and comment. In other words, he is an excellent journalist. He was born in Sulton, Kentucky. His family moved when he was quite young, however, to Shawnee, Oklahoma, where he lived until the time when he went to the University of Chicago. His first writing was done for a Shawnee paper. Later, he was literary critic for the Chicago "Tribune". In New York, his "Bookman's Day Book" for the New York "Tribune" caused a sensation by its rather breathless revealments. His first book, which has been years in preparation, is to be a collection of his critical essays. A voracious reader, a student of

French, a young gentleman of violent opinions, he is always stimulating and often annoying.

GEORGE SANTAYANA'S "LIFE OF REASON"

GEORGE SANTAYANA is a gifted Spaniard who succeeded to a chair of philosophy at Harvard, began to write when he was forty, got fed up with the Harvard atmosphere, and fled to Paris where he is now writing what are certainly the finest contributions, from the point of view of style and ideas, to philosophic thought since Remy de Gourmont's death. To say that Santayana is the Emerson of his era is far from flattering to Santayana who is a logical, clear thinking psychologist, dissociator of ideas, and æsthetician as against Emerson's confused and impalpable transcendentalism, Unitarian freedom of spirit, minor parish breath of vision, and suburban æsthetics; but Santayana occupies or is beginning to occupy with his generation in America a position analogous to that of Emerson in his. By fleeing to Europe he has been able to perform a pedagogical service of vaster importance than was permitted him when he was irked by the formalism of collegiate education, the petty academic fussing and

narrowness of his colleagues, and the discouraging stupidity prevalent among students seeking mass instruction. He is now the one spar to which educated youths are able to cling amid the perpetual flux. He is the only remaining philosopher writing in English who is not a specialist in something or other—psychiatry, education, single tax, Manchester labor, Chinese history, or what not; hence he is the only one who can see things in the round, criticize freely with an unbiased and open mind, and offer ideas and suggestions not tinged with Utopian pink or parti pris. He is a free spirit, with all that that felicitous French phrase connotes. Philosophically he is a man of the world; spiritually, scientifically, literarily he knows his way about; he is nobody's fool, not Lenin's, Balfour's, Freud's, Cézanne's, Rolland's, Shaw's, Morgan's, or God's. What is rarest among his coevals in his clan, he has taken the trouble to learn how to write.

You will not get the finest flavor of his style in the books listed here, of which, in a new edition, these remarks are apropos. When he wrote "The Life of Reason", Santayana was still struggling with his technique of expression in a language alien to him by birth and temperament. He was still occasionally mixing his tenses, achieving an

uneasy idiom with a foreign accent, and escaping only with the greatest difficulty from the jargon of the professional philosophers.

It is not that he is difficult to read in his earlier work, but that it is sometimes quaint reading, as if he were overwhelmed by the importance of what he had to say and was taking infinite pains to say it slowly, deliberately, distinctly. With "Winds of Doctrine" he had become at ease with his medium and familiar with his ideas; when he wrote "Soliloquies in England", he had perfected the most charming address imaginable in English—subtle, smiling, cultured, allusive, witty, cadenced and nuanced. All traces of the old constraint had gone; his fancy was liberated to dance gaily and in rhythm with his thought; the data of his experience and the residuum of his reading had lost the blighting touch of the treatise and become the materials of an amiable and exquisite discourse.

But, nevertheless, it is important for the reader who is charmed and stimulated by Santayana's later essays to know something of the foundation upon which this charm is builded. He will get that in "The Life of Reason", wherein Santayana applies the intelligence test to the aspects of human

progress observable in society, religion, art, science, and common sense. What he attempted to do, and succeeded in a great measure in doing, was to examine the concepts involved in those terms and pick away from them all the fallacious excrescences which have grown up and surrounded them. He sought the reasonable, the intelligent idea expressed by those terms. He pursued the Socratic method of elimination of the false by question and answer. He applied the rule of common sense to matters of belief, doctrine, theoretical ethics, personal conduct, artistic expression, and social theory—and by common sense he means an understanding arrived at by intelligent analysis, free from myth, illusion, and messianic hope.

One has the feeling that Santayana wrote "The Life of Reason" in order to discover himself, to give order and form to the impressions, conclusions, and intimations about life he had gained from experience and meditation. That is, of course, what all artists, philosophers, poets, and theologians do; but I believe there was in Santayana more than the usual serious self-communion. One finds in him no trace of vanity, of cocking an eye to a possible audience of influential but closed minds, of posturing for posterity, or impressing by erudition and

long words. On the other hand, there is an intellectual self-reliance discoverable in almost no other thinker or essayist: he writes without footnotes and bibliographies; he almost never uses a quotation from another writer. He does not bolster up his ideas and opinions with pilferings from the accumulations of libraries. He is, in brief, independent, honest, and courageous.

Now, let us see what are some of his ideas. It is an ironic paradox that Santayana, who first built up a philosophy of reason in five volumes, has now come pretty much to distrust reason as an effective agent in the governance of human affairs. What he would now term a reasonable attitude toward life is one which holds that every man must forge his own philosophy. As for one George Santayana he has found it advantageous to sit like patience on a monument smiling at grief, checking his passions that he may savor and conserve—not waste—them, do unto his neighbor as he would wish to be done by, forego possessions and attachments as a check upon his freedom, and enjoy life as a spectacle (to write about) rather than submerge himself in the business of living. To arrive at this he has examined the possible other courses and has found what he conceives to

be the factors of satisfaction and happiness in each.

But it would be wrong to assume that "The Life of Reason" is in the nature of a preachment or an exhortation. It becomes a moral philosophy only by its implications as a history of human ideas. Santayana is a naturalist of the mind, a questioner, a tester, a sceptic, and he has written: "Scepticism is a moral force, a tendency to sincerity, economy and fine adjustment of life and mind to experience." The calibre of his reasoning, the light he throws upon human institutions, is seen to good advantage in his elucidation of the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism in "Reason in Religion":

This underlying Teuton religion, which we must call Protestantism for lack of a better name, is anterior to Christianity and can survive it. To identify it with the Gospel may have seemed possible so long as, in opposition to pagan Christianity, the Teutonic spirit could appeal to the Gospel for support. The Gospel has indeed nothing pagan about it, but it has also nothing Teutonic; and the momentary alliance of two such disparate forces must naturally cease with the removal of the common enemy which alone united them. The Gospel is unworldly, disenchanted, ascetic; it treats ecclesiastical establishments with tolerant contempt, conforming to them with indifference; it regards prosperity as a danger, earthly ties as a burden,

Sabbaths as a superstition; it revels in miracles; it is democratic and antinomian; it loves contemplation, poverty, and solitude; it meets sinners with sympathy and heartfelt forgiveness, but Pharisees and Puritans with biting scorn. In a word, it is a product of the Orient, where all things are old and equal and a profound indifference to the business of earth breeds a silent dignity and high sadness of spirit. Protestantism is the exact opposite of all this. It is convinced of the importance of success and prosperity; it abominates what is disreputable; contemplation seems to it idleness, solitude selfishness, and poverty a sort of dishonorable punishment. It is constrained and punctilious in righteousness; it regards a married and industrious life as typically godly, and there is a sacredness to it, as of a vacant Sabbath, in the unoccupied higher spaces which such an existence leaves for the soul. It is sentimental, its ritual is meagre and unctuous, it expects no miracles, it thinks optimism akin to piety, and regards profitable enterprise and practical ambition as a sort of moral vocation. Its Evangelicalism lacks the notes so prominent in the Gospel, of disillusion, humility, and speculative detachment. Its benevolence is optimistic and aims at raising men to a conventional well-being; it thus misses the inner appeal of Christian charity which, being merely remedial in physical matters, begins by renunciation and looks to spiritual freedom and peace.

You will see from this that the dominant spirit of the United States, as it is of England and Germany, is Protestantism. Protestantism is a religious spirit best suited to a

raw, new, energetic people. It becomes, as Santayana points out, unpleasantly materialistic by the very excess of its own virtues as an inspiration to progress and achievement. For himself, Santayana is steeped in the Catholic spirit and we find in his poetry no less than in his later essays the passive attitude toward life, the attitude of good-humored resignation; but he is never blind to the merits of Protestantism. England and the English fascinate him; he admires the Englishman's bland ability to get on in the world, his self-control, his self-isolation, his manners, and his enterprise.

There is perhaps in no European literature a more illuminating and intelligent discussion of love, family life, industry, aristocracy, democracy and patriotism than is to be found in "Reason in Society"; there is no saner short history of religions than is to be found in "Reason in Religion"; there is no more provocative upsetting of petty complaisances than is to be found in "Reason in Common Sense". In "Reason in Art", Santayana pursues the dialectical method perhaps too far; but in this book he does away with a vast amount of lumber and gets at the essentials of great art and of the artist's relation to society, about which relation he has none of the common

or artistic sentimentalism. Best to illuminate Santayana's attitude one should recall his answers to a critic who used the phrase, "one has a right to—"; to which Santayana replied that "right" does not exist in the abstract, that no one possesses "rights" except those which have been granted him or he has been able to exact. Santayana is not a sentimentalist or a mystic praying to the moon.

His poems are chill and formal, as they would be from his habit of checking his impulses or laughing at them. He has too much of the comic spirit in him to be a good poet; he is too much a man of cities to paint poetic landscapes; and he is too much a sceptic to put much fervor in meditative poetic sighs and grief at the tears of things. But in his poetry you will get, condensed, much of his philosophy, as in his essays, particularly his later ones, you will find him much of a poet.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

Dorothy Canfield Fisher was born at Lawrence, Kansas; but in my mind she belongs firmly with her ancestors in the hills of Vermont. Perhaps the addition of middle-western practicality to New England imagination is one secret of her really great power as a novelist and her determination as a student. In her house at Arlington, Vermont, not so far from Robert Frost at South Shaftsbury, she is an eager mother and wife, a swift, active, almost bird-like little woman. When I last saw her she was busy on the proofs of her translation of Papini's "Life of Christ". It is a rare thing for an author of such scope and imagination to be also a student of language, of French, of Italian, even of Old English, an earnest interpreter of Madame Montessori. Her understanding of American life and of French character has made her novels unique in contemporary fiction. They have a quality of wholesome regard for social standards as well as a brave facing of fact. This creed she gives us in the "Nietzschean Pilgrim Fathers". She travels much in Europe; but

her keen interest in the people of Vermont and their community affairs brings her back often to the Green Mountains.

NIETZSCHEAN PILGRIM FATHERS

WHEN I first spelled my way through my history primer's account of the Pilgrim Fathers, the threadbare, too familiar story was all new to me and came fresh-coined from the mint of glory. Swinging my feet and chewing my tongue as I read, I glowed with sympathy for their intrepid resistance to a tyranny which tried hideously to lay hands on the sacred freedom of thought. I was hurraing inwardly for them as they fought their way across the hostile Atlantic, as they endured the heartbreaking difficulties of their first winter, and I nearly shed tears of admiration when they gloriously refused to go back on the ship that would have set them back where men had the monstrous pretension to dictate to other men what they should or should not believe. Swimming in a golden haze of hero worship I rolled under my tongue the quotation from Mrs. Hemans which ended the chapter:

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod!
They left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God.

And all unsuspecting, I turned over the page for the next lesson.

Roger Williams and the Quakers were in the next lesson.

I strained my poor nine year old eyes hotly over the unbelievable story. Two hundred and sixty years divided me from the actors of those times, but that afternoon I went off into the woods and shouted excitedly at the top of my voice back across the centuries, to my forefathers, "But looky-here, looky-here! You're doing just what you left England so people wouldn't do it to you. Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! Oh, *please* don't!"

My forefathers returning no answer to my heartbroken appeal, I tried the generation immediately before mine, and shyly put a brief question to my father on the subject. My father's carelessly cynical answer brought a club down on what was left of my cracked and tottering ideal. "Oh, shucks, the Pilgrim Fathers wanted the same sort of 'freedom of thought' that everybody wants . . . freedom to bully everybody else into thinking as they do."

Of course the elasticity of childhood and youth being invincible, I did not keep this disillusion in the centre of my consciousness. I poked it down into the darkest

corner of my mind and thought I had forgotten it. I grew up to be nineteen and twenty, and as automatically as I put up my hair and learned how to dance, I plunged into the other natural accompaniment of being nineteen and twenty, and became a radical. "Down with the tyranny of the past" resounds recurrently with healthy vigor as each generation advances toward its later teens, and I sallied forth with others of my age, a red flag in one hand and a bomb in the other. I cannot now remember just what we attacked but I suppose, from the dates, that we waged war on such moth-eaten old formulæ as, "Woman's sphere is the home": "My father's God is good enough for me": "Impressionism is all poppycock, paint pots thrown in the face of the public": "Organized Labor is flying in the face of the immutable law of supply and demand", etc., etc. I do remember that any adverse criticism of Ibsen made us froth at the mouth, and that we were prepared to shed our heart's blood for the right of women to wear rainy day skirts as high as their shoe tops. "Liberty, sacred liberty!" we shouted as we charged.

When did I begin to notice a certain deadly likeness to our Puritan forebears? When did the recollection of Roger Williams

and the Quakers begin to seep coldly into my mind? I don't know when. With advancing years, I suppose, and with that recognition of the vast, incalculable diversity of human nature which can only come after a considerable first-hand contact with all kinds of people.

Perhaps it was the too great vogue of our campaign for emancipating women from domestic slavery that made me first wonder whether it was such an uphill battle for liberty we were fighting, and whether it was really liberty we were getting. We had repudiated at the tops of our voices the ridiculously sweeping generalization that every woman is happier bringing up children than in any other occupation. Things began to go our way; the writers on our side began to be in fashion, to be considered the knowing and sophisticated ones. The other side hung its sentimental head in defeated silence.

And then—oh, bother, take it! It seemed to me I began to see Roger Williams and the Quakers approaching. The sound, much needed axiom "Every woman is not a natural mother" seemed insensibly to have become "No woman is a natural mother". After all there are women, just as there are men, who prefer children and home life to

anything else. In the generation of our grandmothers no girl "in our set" had ventured to say she wanted anything in life but to marry and bring up children. After we had said our say, no girl "in our set" ventured to say that she *did* want to marry and bring up children.

All that we had done, apparently, was to vary the kind of intimidation, from the kind that had not suited our tastes to the kind that did. We had summoned people to free themselves from the tyrannical dicta of preachers in the pulpits, and had clapped upon them the other tyranny of the radical magazines. Were they getting any more chance to be themselves? Weren't they being bullied into believing what radical thinkers told them to believe, rather than what they really did believe? Were people with a mystical, poetic, religious turn of mind getting any fairer show now than people with a logical, clean cut turn of mind had when we were twenty? When we said "self-expression" did we mean the expression of Bernard Shaw's self? Did we not yell "sentimental hypocrite" at people who ventured to express other personalities than the brisk, clear eyed, level headed, disillusioned type which happened to suit our fancy?

My early fierce outraged scorn for the

Puritan Fathers began to be tempered with humility. It wasn't such an easy trick to turn . . . to leave people free to believe what you *knew* was all nonsense.

And yet, with every year that revolved before my eyes the kaleidoscope of the infinitely various differences between human beings, there was forced upon me the intolerable conviction that perhaps what we knew was all nonsense might not be all nonsense for everybody.

One's first conception of that idea is a terrible moment in life. I suppose it is the beginning of old age—certainly of middle age. It is as devastating as an earthquake to the exhilarating cocksureness which has hitherto been the solid ground under one's feet. Forever afterward one advances with craven caution, one tries to modify sweeping generalizations by those qualifying clauses which normal human beings instinctively detest. It is unpopular enough business to temper any sweeping generalization whatever—people are uneasy when historians try to qualify to greater truthfulness even such dead issues as opinions on the causes of the Civil War, or what sort of man George Washington really was. But when anyone tries to limit with qualifying phrases the generalizations actually in fashion, then

indeed do people cast him out of the righteous ranks of orthodox Plymouth and drive him off to live with the Indians.

Somewhat aloofly then—my natural inheritance of human intolerance inhibited by the certainty that there is much to be said on both sides—and considerably ashamed of my aloofness, I look on at the old struggle being fought as fiercely today as it was twenty years ago.

One of the sweeping generalizations in fashion now is that the late war was caused solely by capitalists and fought either by men naturally brutes, or by finer specimens forced against their will into the ranks by brutalized public opinion. Everybody knows in his heart that this is not a complete statement of the truth, but no one in the ranks of the sophisticated may be permitted to qualify the statement. The tyranny of what is "the thing" to think is as absolute in one direction now as it was during the war when no one was permitted to qualify the equally outrageous statement that the war was caused solely by sympathy for ravaged Belgium and was fought by snowy souled Crusaders.

Another sweeping generalization just now settling itself in the saddle is that middle western American life starves and cramps all

souls submitting to it—starves and cramps, that is, more than any other organized human society puts the screws on originality and personality anywhere else. Nobody must qualify that statement under pain of a sentence of exile, passed by the new Pilgrim Fathers, battling gloriously for universal freedom to think as they do.

Another more intimate and personal conviction is that self-control is synonymous with self-mutilation, that self-abnegation is always perverse morbidity.

Another one states that ethics based on enlightened self-interest should and will take the place of religion in human life and that any form of "religion" which involves a mystical sense of communion with a power greater than ourselves, is as out of date in the human mind as the appendix in the human body.

These, since they happen to arouse no personal passion of mine, I can consider calmly. But the Old Adam is not dead in me. Let anyone maintain that the principle of authority *qua* authority is needed in human life, and every atom of me rises up aflame in denial. I cannot conceive it calmly, cannot put my mind on it impartially as I do on other matters. Any mention of it in my presence is like dropping a lighted

match into a keg of gunpowder. I go off with a shattering bang. It is my flaming conviction that *nobody* should pretend to tell *anybody* how to run his life. This conviction seems so axiomatic to me that it was like turning all my brain cells inside out, to get a faint, distant glimpse of the possibility that perhaps, occasionally in some cases, once in a while, the principle of authority might be necessary for the stiffening into shape of certain especially jelly-like temperaments. I don't believe it! Heavens, no! I can never *believe* it! But as from time to time I encounter, among the maddeningly diverse specimens of human nature which surround me, a specimen especially inchoate, born without the necessary structure of moral bones, I *almost* perceive the possibility that even my own pet sweeping generalization may need occasional qualification.

This perception, faint and passing as it is, makes me so dizzy and sick that I am sure I could never act on it. I am not even sure that I could refrain from attacking someone else trying to act on it. I try to be flexible minded and tolerant but I stiffen and flame when that conviction is touched. This makes me understand how other people feel about their special generalizations, how

the woman who has fought her way out of a hideous, hide bound, joy killing creed, stiffens and flames at any suggestion that some people need a mystical religion: how a man who has lived with an exasperatingly "devoted mother" flares up ragingly at the idea that self-sacrifice may be commendable. I understand that there is no help for us, that we are none of us battling for freedom of thought. We are battling to set up our dogmatic convictions just as our fathers did, and as we despised them for doing. Our convictions are different from theirs. That is all. We are ready to fight to force on others what Samuel Butler has told us to believe, instead of what Tennyson told our fathers to believe. We don't intend to allow any variation from our standards if we can help it, any more than they did.

For a time I was greatly cast down over the discovery of this invincible intolerance in all our hearts. Apparently we were no better than anyone else. Had any good come at all of our fine ideas of liberalism and freedom? Had we helped the younger generation in the least?

I began to look around me at the younger generation, the really younger ones, those under adolescence, the ones who have been brought up in the best modern manner, un-

repressed by stale old restrictions, unhampered by stale old beliefs. And I began to think that I saw two things: first, that the beliefs from which we revolted are not stale and old to them at all, but gleaming bright with novelty; and second, as to these beliefs of ours which we have tried to force on them, they are preparing a revolt from us, as they advance toward their later teens. One of my modern acquaintances told me the other day, "What do you think? My Jeannette is just crazy about babies. She'll leave a bunch of her twelve year old playmates *any* day to fool around the whole afternoon with our neighbor's eight months old little girl. And she says when she grows up and marries, she wants to have seven children, and *not belong to a single club!* Where does she get such ideas? It's nothing *I've* taught her; nothing she's picked up at home!"

It occurs to me that the great saints and heroes of mysticism never come from religious families, but out of a free thinking, materialistic milieu. There comes to me with a clap, what every old woman knows, that rigidly neat housekeepers always have careless, slack daughters and that the daughters of careless, slack housekeepers always react violently into violent tidiness.

I begin to wonder, just wonder specula-

tively, how Christian ideals will seem to young people who have the intimate excitement and triumph of discovering them under protest, rather than having them crammed down their throats. It occurs to me that perhaps all we have been doing, as we impetuously emptied the baby out of the bath, was to enhance the value of babies. Will not the youngest generation have a perfectly fresh, spontaneous joy in rushing to rescue what we have thrown away? Isn't it possible that in a generation brought up to ruthless logic *à la* Shaw, there may be individuals with spiritual and mystical minds, who will revolt against ruthless logic as hotly as we against dogmas, and who, reveling in all the inimitable joys of martyrdom, will fight, bleed, and die for the right to believe in what they believe—even if it is in a religion of faith? Among children brought up to believe that self-development is the highest duty of man, may there not even now be growing up here and there some whose brain cells are different from those of the majority, who will stumble some day by accident into a self-abnegating deed, recognize in the sweetness of the pleasure it gives them their own rightful inheritance, and fleeing the intolerance of the latter day Nietzschean Pilgrim Fathers, betake themselves off to

live the life they were meant for? We will persecute them I dare say, and call them reactionary, and hold them up as horrible examples of sentimental self-deception. And all that we will really accomplish, as far as they are concerned, will be to tear from the pure gold of their ideals the disfiguring rags of outgrown dogma, which we mistook for the thing itself.

On the whole, as I think it over, it seems to me that if we do that, we will have done about all that can be expected of any generation. Human progress is slow and spiral. Perhaps, although it is certainly not in the least what we meant to do, that will be counted as our sufficient contribution.

Oliver Herford

A slight, white-haired, indefinite, hilariously entertaining gentleman is Oliver Herford. His caricatures, his drawings, his verses, his fables, his essays have long delighted American audiences. He is almost as well known an illustrator as he is a humorist. In a triple capacity, therefore, he is associated with "Life", for he is also on its staff of editors. He was born in England; but his father who was a preacher brought him in his youth to Boston. He was educated, curiously enough, at Antioch College, Ohio. From this curious background he emerged radiating a sense of humor. He is known as a *farceur*, as a player of practical jokes, as a *bon vivant*. Popular wherever he goes, one hears that since his last trip to England he has become thoroughly American—he no longer wears a monocle.

THE HUNDREDTH AMENDMENT

A Chapter from The Outline of Posterity

AFTER the passage of the Ninety-eighth Amendment making it a misdemeanor to "*manufacture, sell, own, possess, pur-*

chase, nurse, dandle or otherwise caress or display that effigy of the infant form commonly known as a Doll" . . . the abolition of that feathered symbol of vicarious maternity, the Stork, followed as a matter of course.

The passage of the Anti-Stork Bill or, to be more accurate, the Ninety-ninth Amendment, thanks to the tenacity and tact of President John Quincy Epstein, was the most expeditious piece of legislation put through by the hundred and fifth Congress.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the introduction of lectures on obstetrics into the curriculum of the kindergartens had done much to educate the child vote and that at the time the fate of the Stork was hanging in the balance, that once esteemed Bird of Prurient Evasion was already becoming unpopular and well on its way to join the Dodo.

And now the department of government devoted to the cause of Infant Uplift, having abolished the Mock-Offspring and settled the fate of the Bird of Nativity, cast about for some new Field of Endeavor.

And what more fitting than that they should light upon that hoary old impostor masquerading under the several aliases

Santa Claus, Saint Nicholas, Kris Kringle, and Father Christmas?

At once the Propaganda was started.

Press agents were engaged, lecture tours arranged, magazines subsidized.

No matter what it might cost, this "Vulture gnawing at the Palladium of Infant Emancipation" must be destroyed!!

Santa Claus, once, in the memory of living men and women, adored by children and winked at by their parents, was now branded as an impostor, a mountebank, a public nuisance, and a perverter of infant intelligence.

Santa Claus was an outlaw from the Commonwealth of Reason.

It was "thumbs down" for Santa!

It may be well to explain right here (since none of the events chronicled in this History has yet happened) that the movement for the Emancipation and Self-Determination of Infants, which has now taken such great strides, had its initiation in the presidential term of Miles Standish Sovietski when Congress extended the franchise to every child over five years of age who had made any serious contribution to literature or higher mathematics.

It was in the same year that President Sovietski signed the Sixty-fourth Amend-

ment to the Federal Constitution, prohibiting the publication of fairy tales, and Congress suspended the Limitation-of-Search Act in order that private libraries and nurseries might be raided without warning and all copies of the forbidden works summarily seized and destroyed.

Simultaneously with the federal enactment, the states of Washington, Illinois, Nevada, and Oregon, ever in the advance of any great intellectual movement, passed laws prohibiting "*the personification or representation, public or private, in theatre, music hall, club house, lodge, church fair, schoolhouse, or private residence, of any supernatural fairy, or otherwise mythical person or persons or fraction thereof*".

The passing of a Constitutional Amendment was now an almost everyday occurrence. Indeed, since the ratification of the Forty-fourth Amendment prohibiting the use of sarsaparilla as a beverage (coffee and tea had been legislated out of existence five years earlier) the enactment of a new Amendment excited little or no comment. Even the Seventy-ninth Amendment forbidding "*the use of caviar, club sandwiches, and buttonhole bouquets, except for medicinal purposes*", received only casual notice in the Metropolitan Dailies.

The twentieth century was rapidly nearing its close and the political apathy that for fifty years had been gradually benumbing the Public morale now threatened to paralyze completely what little still remained of courage and initiative.

Even the latest work of Bernard Shaw, "A Bird's-Eye View of the Infinite", published (with a five volume preface) on Mr. Shaw's hundred and fortieth birthday, aroused so little resentment that his projected visit to the United States had to be abandoned, in spite of the fact that "Bean and Soup o'Bean", written only a week earlier, was acknowledged to have contributed largely to the triumph of the Seventy-ninth Amendment, making Vegetarianism compulsory in the United States.

The Hundredth Amendment passed quickly through the earlier stages of routine and perfunctory debate without any appreciable sign of anything approaching popular protest.

Here and there a guarded expression such as "Poor old Santa! I'm sorry he's got to go!" was voiced, in the privacy of a club, by some elderly gentleman. Nothing more.

Somewhere, behind Somebody, was a Power that directed and guided,—perhaps threatened. Nobody knew who or what or

where it was or in what manner it worked, but work it did and to such purpose that, after a scant week of cut and dried speech-making that deceived no one, the Amendment was submitted unanimously by both houses of Congress and the foregone conclusion of ratification was all that remained to make the abolition of Santa Claus an accomplished fact.

Then, inevitably as fish follows soup, followed the ratification.

The Hundredth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, prohibiting Santa Claus, slipped through the ratification process like an oil prospectus in a mail chute. There was only one hitch, Rhode Island, but since Rhode Island had refused to ratify a single one of the last Seventy-nine Amendments, her action was accepted as part of the program and a proof of unanimity.

So Santa Claus was abolished?

Not so fast please!—Who's writing this History anyway?

'Twas the night before Christmas
And in the White House
Not a creature was stirring
Not even a * * * * *

For the benefit of the clever reader who may have guessed the word left out in the

last line of the above quatrain, I will explain that the asterisks are used in obedience to a clause of the Ninety-first Amendment prohibiting, both in speech and print, the use of the word * * * * * which, as the political emblem of the Free People's Party (now happily defunct), came into such contempt that it was made a misdemeanor "*to print, publish, own, sell, purchase, or consult any book, pamphlet, catalogue, circular, or dictionary containing the word * * * * **". It has been estimated that over eighty million dollars' worth of Century and Standard dictionaries were destroyed in the first year of this Amendment's operation. The loss in Nursery Rhymes, children's books, and Natural Histories is beyond computation.

But to return to the White House.

President John Quincy Epstein had retired to his study on the second floor shortly before midnight, taking with him the engrossed copy of the Hundredth Amendment which now only required his Spencerian signature to expunge the name of Santa Claus forever from the American speech and language as utterly and irrevocably as the forbidden word * * * * *.

The hours passed in a perfectly orderly manner, like school children at a fire drill—*one, two, three, four*—without pushing or

jostling—*five, six, seven, eight*—(don't you think history is much more interesting in the form of a simple "Outline" like this than spun out in the common manner?)—*nine, ten*—! At eleven o'clock the door of the President's study was burst open by the order of the Vice President, Rebecca Crabtree, now, by a sudden and mysterious stroke of Fate, herself become the President of the United States.

For John Quincy Epstein was dead.

How or just when he died will never be known. Always a cold, forbidding (not to say prohibiting) man, his body when found was still cold—if anything colder; his watch which should have marked the exact moment of his demise, was ticking merrily, so the exact moment will forever remain unrecorded.

But Santa Claus still lives and will live forever!

On the massive gold-inlaid-with-ivory desk (a Christmas gift from the United Department Stores of America), lay a paper, inscribed, and signed in the President's handwriting, and sealed with his official seal.

It was the presidential veto of the Hundredth Amendment; and by virtue of a clause in Amendment Thirty-three "*no Constitutional Amendment vetoed by the Presi-*

*dent shall ever be resubmitted to the country
nor any fraction thereof—”*

Santa Claus will live forever! Hurray
for Santa Claus!

Benjamin Brawley

The Negro question in America has become a peculiarly delicate one. I have never met Benjamin Brawley; but he is one of the most respected members of his race in America. He is said to be a preacher of ability and an earnest and able student of letters. He was born in Columbia, South Carolina, and was educated at Morehouse College, the University of Chicago and Harvard. He is now pastor of a Baptist church in Brockton, Massachusetts. His books vary from discussions of the Negro to works on the drama. I asked him as one of the intellectual leaders among the Negroes to express frankly his opinions of the Negro problem in American writing. This he did, and I have published here, as in *THE BOOKMAN*, this strong statement without editorial excision. As representing a viewpoint, I believe it to be exceedingly enlightening.

THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

I HAVE often wondered why someone has not written as a supplement to Lowell an essay entitled "On a Certain Condescension

in Americans". Such an effort, in some small measure at least, might serve to give us a clearer estimate of ourselves.

When the drums beat we are not likely to recall that we are the most inconsistent people in the world. We pride ourselves on spending millions for education, but the draft showed us where we stood, and we have recently been informed that we are merely a nation of sixth-graders. We still value buildings more than brains, and if you will ask the average college student to read aloud a page of Newman or Pater you will see how literate we are. We are aghast at Armenia—naturally, for in Texas we lynch ten men in twice as many days.

We have been accused of intolerance, and a finger has been pointed at the Puritan. As a matter of fact we are exceedingly long suffering. We tolerate everything from sixteen dollar coal to our most recent Congress. We tolerate the Ku Klux Klan. A score of men were killed in Herrin in cold blood, and the authorities are paralyzed. For a sensible liberty loving people we are the most easily browbeaten and bamboozled on this planet, and no one knows this better than the politician.

Our powerlessness, our utter futility in the face of a concrete situation is sometimes

amazing. We intend well, but either we ourselves or our machinery are at fault. In our courts the conviction of a man of means does not necessarily imply a real conviction but simply a new trial. We are torn by industrial and social unrest, and for a whole session our statesmen discuss the bonus and ship subsidy with an eye to the next election. Sometimes our national honor is involved. If occasion demands we can send a million men to Europe, but not until we have been trampled upon and our rights flouted for months. Is it any wonder that our flag is not always respected abroad?

Sometimes in our leisurely democracy we develop kindness at an astonishing rate. Nothing can surpass our real generosity and charity. A few months ago, however, we read that the President of the United States and the Governor of Pennsylvania both interceded for the life of a dog that had been condemned to death. Dick, it appeared, was owned by an alien contrary to law. I could not help wondering about this animal that was able to call forth such remarkable weight of executive clemency. Was it white or black or brown? Did its ancestors come over in the "Mayflower"? Could its grandfather vote? Mark you this, however: you have not for these many years heard of any

president's writing to a governor about a citizen who was sliced or burned to death within these United States.

Our inconsistency does not mean that as a nation we have lost sight of our port. It does mean, however, that we wander needlessly at sea before finding it. Democracy does not always move in a straight line, and sometimes when far off its course it has to make a violent effort to find its way. While moreover we talk about democracy, the fact is that there are always with us those who want something else. In the good old days Rhode Island was the most offensive little slave dealer in the country, and we do not always stop to think that there was a time when the students at Harvard were registered in the catalogue on the basis of their social standing. Among the rockribbed families of Boston there was ever a welcome for the courtly southerner with whom trade was good and behind whom was the romance of plantations and slaves. It is not an accident that in recent discussion of the Jew and the Negro New England has again beckoned to the south. Sooner or later in such a civilization the worm turns; the underdog wriggles out of our grasp; and, the glory of democracy is that it gives him a chance to work out his freedom—and live.

In the new day to which we have come it is necessary first of all then that we keep our faith—faith in our country, in ourselves, in humanity. Let us also as never before honor Truth—not propaganda, not the flattery of a demagogue, and not the jaundice of a hectic journalism, but simple, clear eyed Truth. This will mean that we shall have to readjust many old values and beware of all outgrown shibboleths. Our country is changing, and those persons who insist on abiding by the opinions formed twenty years ago simply insist on living in another age and another world.

With nothing shall we have to be more careful about hasty judgment than with subjects relating to the Negro. Today there is no telling what an individual Negro may or may not do. At the close of the Civil War hardly more than one in ten could read; today illiteracy has been reduced to nearly twenty per cent, and instead of his being your tenant you may even find that the Negro you know is your landlord. The race is increasingly complex, and in some matters of music and other forms of art it is just now among the most “advanced” in the country. The Negro is naturally such an artist and he has such an innate appreciation of acting that, keeping his essential

faith unchanged, he is likely to take on a new form of worship quite as easily as a new garment. Just now Bahaism is popular with the esoteric, and since the war cynicism has been developed almost to a cult.

This, however, is only one phase of the matter. The other is that of the strange prominence of the Negro throughout the whole course of American history. In the colonial era it was the economic advantage of slavery over servitude that caused it to displace this institution as a system of labor. Two of the three compromises that entered into the making of the Constitution were prompted by the presence of the Negro in the country; the expansion of the southwest depended on his labor; and the question or the excuse of fugitives was the real key to the Seminole Wars. The Civil War was simply to determine the status of the Negro in the Republic, and the legislation after the war determined for a generation the history not only of the south but very largely of the nation as well. The later disfranchising acts have had overwhelming importance, the unfair system of national representation controlling the election of 1916 and thus the attitude of America in the World War.

Here then are two great themes—that of the Negro's aspiration and striving, and that

of his influence on the American body politic—that might reasonably engage the attention of any writer who desires seriously to base a contribution to American literature on this general topic. The first would call for treatment primarily subjective, the second for treatment largely objective; but in any case the work should be sympathetic in the broadest sense. Such treatment I regret the Negro has not had. With our bigotry and conceit on this subject as no other we have been moved by the condescension of which I spoke in the beginning. Two great fallacies still most frequently recur as major premises. One is that the education of the Negro has been a failure, and the other is that the integrity of the womanhood of the race is always open to question. It makes no difference how much evidence there may be to the contrary, any writer of the day is still likely to start off with these two assumptions. The Negro himself moreover must be either a brute or a villain; no rôle more flattering can be thought of. “Othello” is not yet a popular play with American audiences, and I cannot help recalling that some years ago a Shakespearian company performing “The Merchant of Venice” in Atlanta found it advisable to leave out even

the Prince of Morocco, because of local conditions.

Literature is supposed to be the reflection of the national life. Unfortunately much of our recent literature is not complimentary to the country's life. We have the best printers and publishers in the world, but the books that they are asked to produce—tales of scandal sicklied o'er with sentimentalism—should make the nation blush. A generation ago people smiled at E. P. Roe; but Roe was at least harmless. More recently we have arrived at Harold Bell Wright, but even he has been out-Heroded. If we today go over the list of writers of fiction—especially the women—and consider only those who are most outstanding, the extent to which many will be found to have declined from the ideals with which they started is astonishing. In all this welter of commercialism and sensationalism the Negro's one request of literature so far as he is concerned, is that it be fearlessly and absolutely honest. Let it portray life, realistically—just as it is, idealistically—as it ought to be, but let it cease to exploit outworn theories or be the vehicle merely of burlesque. A new age—a new world—is upon us, with new men, new visions, new desires. As never before

patriotism demands that we see life clearly and see it whole.

It is now a little more than six years ago that I contributed to "The Dial" (then in Chicago) a paper entitled "The Negro in American Fiction". In that discussion I endeavored to deal at some length with the work of several authors—notably George W. Cable, Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, and Thomas Dixon—as well as with that of representative short story writers of the day who had introduced Negro characters into their work. In general I advanced the proposition that in our literature as in our social life we were largely dominated by the mob spirit. Much has happened within six years, and now that the war is four years behind us and we are trying to find the "normalcy" of which we have heard, we may not unreasonably ask if there has been any advance. At once we come face to face with the stories and sketches of E. K. Means and Octavus Roy Cohen, and these we find to be burlesque. Five other works of fiction also come to mind, however—"His Own Country" by Paul Kester, "The Shadow" by Mary White Ovington, "Birthright" by T. S. Stribling, "White and Black" by H. A. Shands, and "J. Poin-dexter, Colored" by Irvin S. Cobb. The

last three of these books, it is interesting to observe, have all appeared within the present year, and practically every one of the five is, if not the only book, at least the first novel by its author. Taken together these books mark an advance, but one would hardly assert that they give an adequate reflection of the Negro problem in a treatment at once faithful, powerful, and tragic. "The Shadow" is honest in purpose and method. "His Own Country" and "White and Black", however, while containing much of the machinery of tragedy, both fail to be genuine epics. "Birthright", brilliant in some of its details, begs the whole question with which it undertakes to deal by its attitude on fundamentals, and the treatment of its hero is especially open to attack. J. Poin-dexter of Paducah, who awakens our interest and who is so thoroughly equal to the wiles and pitfalls of New York, himself advises us not to bother with the race problem. "I ain't no problem, I's a pusson," he says; "I craves to be so reguarded." To that extent he marks an advance.

As for the race itself, because of the pressing questions incident to and resultant from the war, its literary energy has recently been given mainly to journalistic work rather than to that more imaginative. Within the last

few years we have had W. E. Burghardt DuBois's collection of essays, "Darkwater", and Claude McKay's striking volume of poems, "Harlem Shadows", but in fiction nothing as poignant as Paul Laurence Dunbar's "The Sport of the Gods" has recently appeared. Several capable writers are appearing on the horizon, however, and within the next few years we may not unreasonably expect more than one work of enduring quality.

It has well been said that to be as good as our fathers were we must be better. As the heirs of the ages it ill becomes us to represent anything but the highest standards of efficiency and the noblest ideals of faith. Our patriotism is too much capitalized; "100 per cent Americanism" too often becomes a specious cry to cover wrong. Has our melting pot been boiling too fast? Very well; let it simmer. Let us not, however, remove the ancient landmark. Let us not be so swept by the fires of bigotry or even by the glamour of industrialism that we fail to take note of men's souls. Those who have been prosperous and happy can never tell what divine gift may not be in the hands of those who have yearned and suffered. The Negro and the Jew, the Italian and the Pole—"inferior races", "scum of the earth"—

exalted and uplifted, purified as we all must be, each brings something peculiar and eternal to the making of our country.

But, say we, they have not culture. No, they have not; none of us have. Those who think they have most are likely to be the most provincial in their outlook. I think I remember hearing Professor Kittredge remark some years ago that culture is a by-product. We tabulate a certain number of facts, reflect upon a few ideas of our own, add a little religion, and incidentally it may be that after a while we impress those about us as—cultured. As a nation, however, we are still in the making, and when we have all so far to go it ill becomes any of us to scorn any man who is struggling toward the light.

Literature should be not only history but prophecy, not only the record of our striving but also the mirror of our hopes and dreams. Let us have the forward as well as the backward look. In England we speak of the Liberalism of Lloyd George as distinct from the old Liberalism of Gladstone. Some such distinction needs to be made in our own country. The disfranchisement of any number or group of citizens, real or attempted, in the United States of America in the third decade of the twentieth century, is an

anachronism. We may try to turn back the clock, but the hands of Time move inexorably forward. Let us be worthy of the new day.

The Negro himself as the irony of American civilization is the supreme challenge to American literature. Like Banquo's ghost he will not down. All faith and hope, all love and longing, all rapture and despair, look out from the eyes of this man who is ever with us and whom we never understand. Gentle as a child, he has also the strength of Hercules. The more we think we know him the more unfathomable he is. No wonder a well known senator who maligned the Negro felt that he was paralyzed because the race prayed that God might afflict him. No wonder is it that, submerged and enthralled, the Negro still rises from the depths to cast by his magic an irresistible spell over the American mind.

